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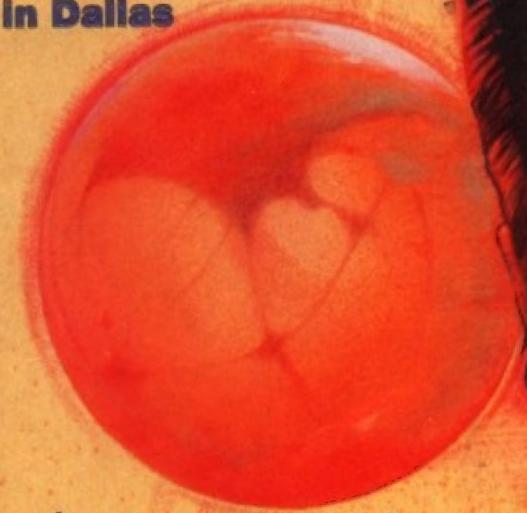
# VideoGames & Computer Entertainment<sup>T.M.</sup>

U.S.A. \$2.95  
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June 1990

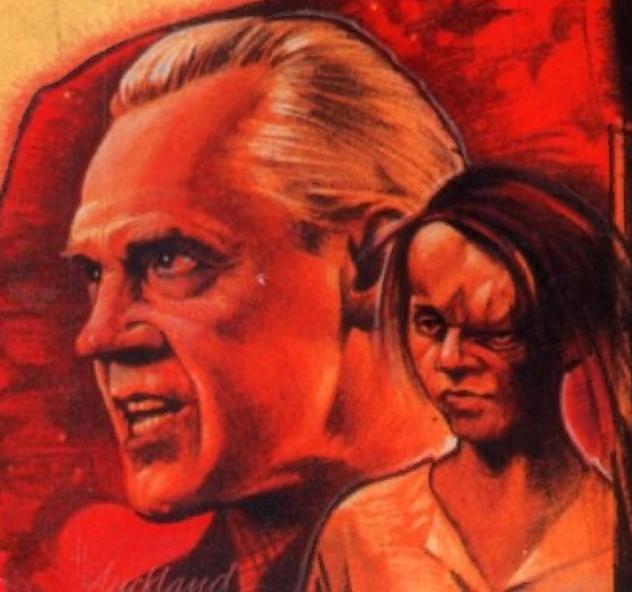
## BEHIND THE SCENES:

The First Leg of the  
Nintendo World  
Championships  
In Dallas



## MAPS AND TIPS:

Sunsoft's *Batman*  
Nintendo's *Faxanadu*



ACCLAIM BRINGS

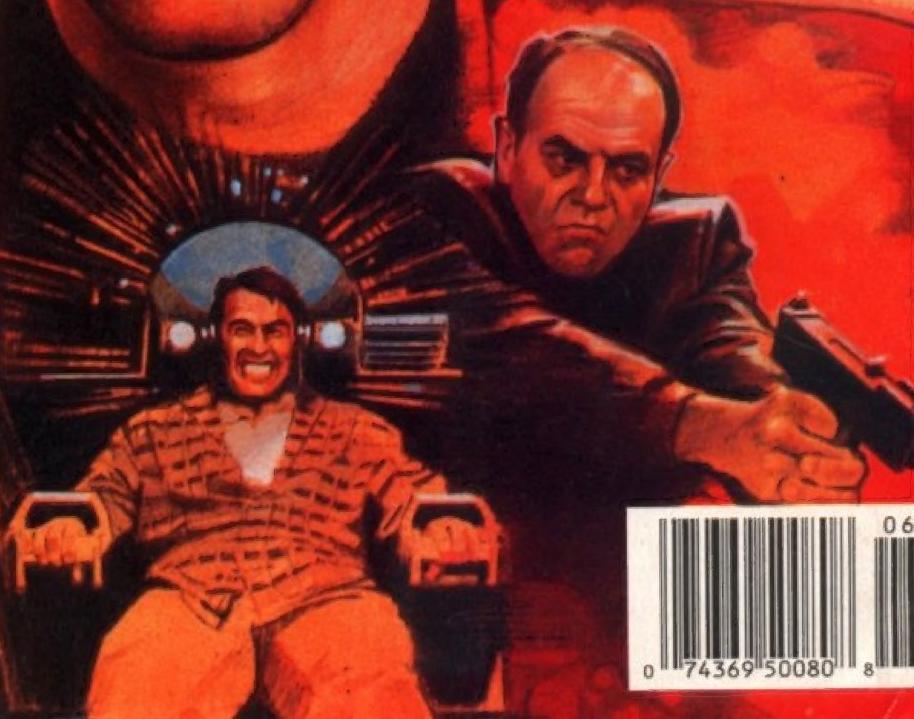
**ARNOLD**

SCHWARZENEGGER'S  
NEW SCI-FI FILM

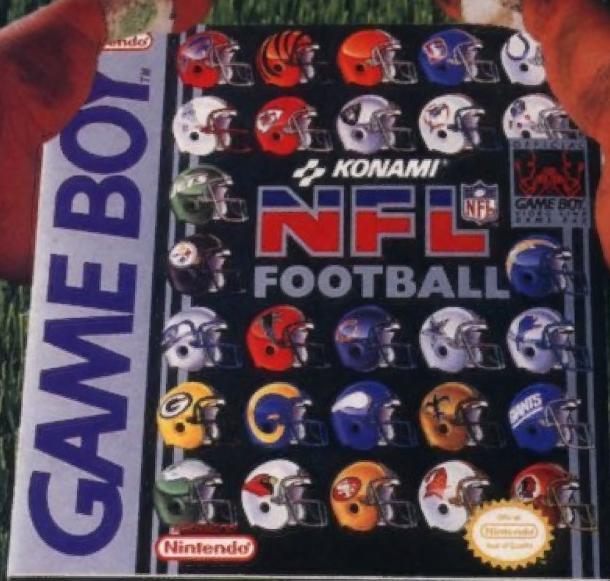
**TOTAL RECALL**

TO THE NES

VG&CE GIVES YOU A  
SNEAK PEEK AT THIS  
EXCITING GAME



# HUT HUT HUT



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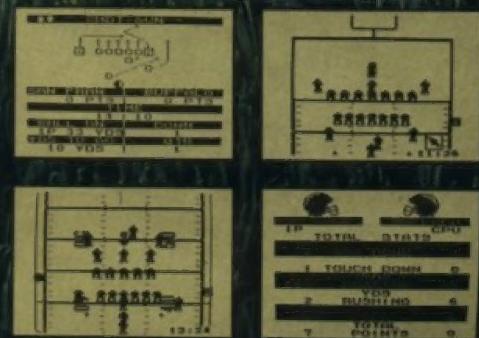
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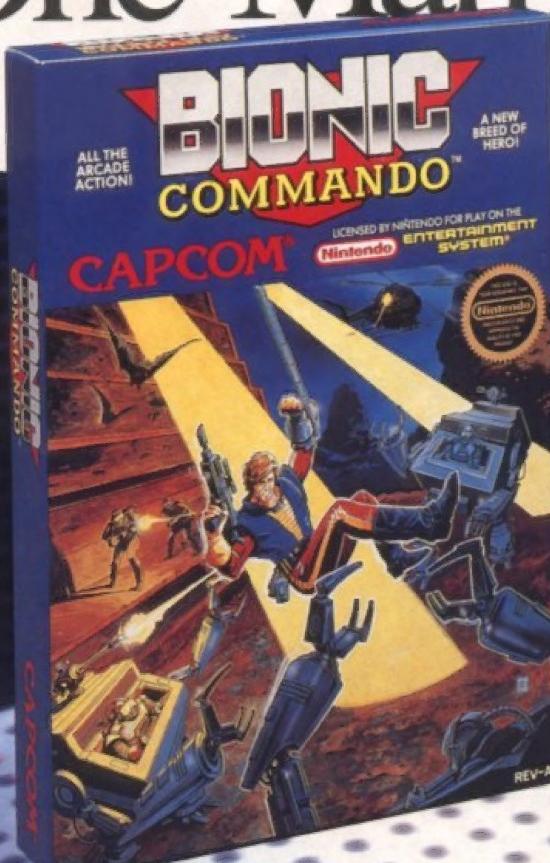
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# Bionic Commando. Experience the Power of a One-Man Army.



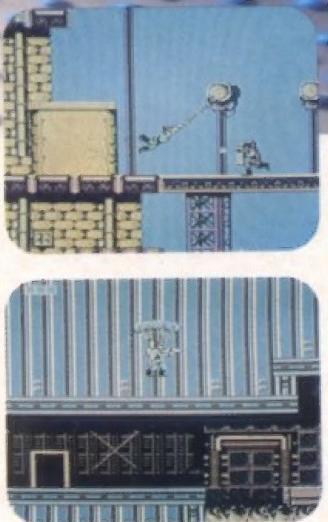
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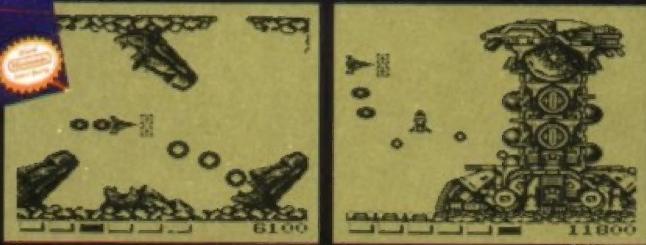
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You're about to strafe the stratosphere, obsessed with ending the long bloody reign of King Nemesis. Suddenly, that heap of rancid royalty's horde of henchmen swoops down out of a nebula, spraying you with lethal molecular bursts. You grit your teeth, clench the controls of your pressure-cooking starfighter, the Proteus 911, and power up its arsenal of land-blasting lasers and dual devices of destruction.

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Bonus levels...or oblivion?

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Cover: Carolco Pictures and Acclaim have banded together to bring one of 1990's most-anticipated films, *Total Recall*, to the NES. Turn to page 30 for a look at the game and how it evolved from script to video game.  
**Cover art: Jim Auckland**  
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by Andy Eddy, with Donn Nauert

*What do you get when you put Arnold Schwarzenegger, the director of RoboCop and a futuristic sci-fi thriller together? You get a hot film that develops into one of the hottest video games of 1990.*



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by Howard H. Wen

*Nintendo has launched a tournament and video-game show that will hit over 30 cities. Our correspondent reports how the first stop of the massive tour came together.*

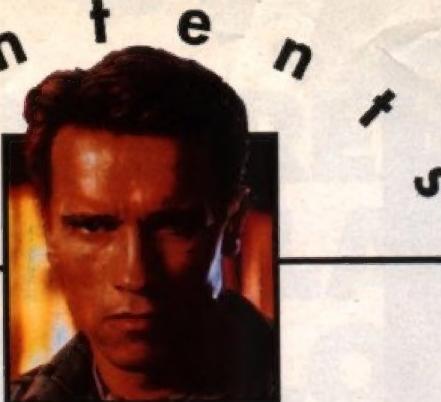
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### BATMAN STRATEGY GUIDE, PART I

by Andy Eddy, Donn Nauert and  
Bissy Eddy

*Having a hard time getting past the Joker's minions? Our crack staff of strategists will put you on the right track to victory in the first half of this exciting game.*

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JUNE 1990

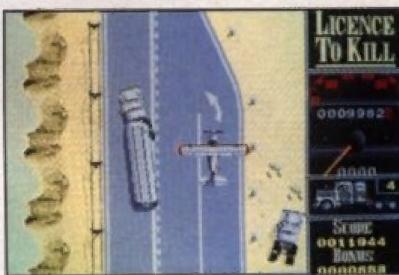


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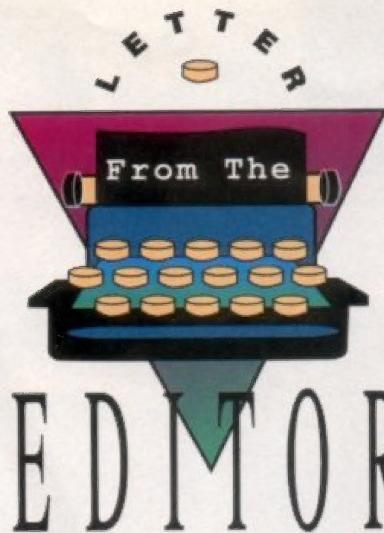
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**m**

ost of us love movies and television shows for the same reason we love video games. It's the old "Cowboys and Indians" thing: You relate to others who are living a more exciting life than yourself. We all have dreams of being a secret agent or being able to fly without a plane. Movies, TV and video games give us that freedom, though in a somewhat detached sense.

With that in mind, there have been quite a few conversions of movie and TV subjects into the format of an electronic game. Look back over the years at the likes of *Batman*, *RoboCop* (who graced our June 1989 cover), all the various *Star Trek*, *Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars* translations and many, many more.

Add to those ranks Arnold Schwarzenegger, previously seen in computer and video games in Activision's *Predator*, who this month appears on VG&CE's cover for his upcoming movie, *Total Recall*. This exciting film by Carolco Pictures is quickly making its way to the game realm, thanks to Acclaim.

It's odd for a game to appear at almost the same time as the TV show or film. Usually the game version comes out well after the media release, which not only allows the public to be more aware of the subject, but also gives plenty of time for development of the game program. After all, most licensed products aren't licensed until later in the

movie or TV show's development. For example, the *RoboCop* NES game faced many delays in the course of its lifetime and didn't appear on shelves until more than two years after the movie first appeared. The *Total Recall* project, which you can read about starting on page 30, was begun shortly after the movie's shooting started.

In the coming months, you'll also be seeing more media subjects on the cover of VG&CE and within its pages. These include tons of licenses from Sega, who is being aggressive in getting licenses from all corners of the entertainment field. Later this year, Sega will be bringing out games based on Spiderman and Dick Tracy, the latter based on the soon-to-be-released film by Warren Beatty.

Not to be left out, the Nintendo community will also see both old and new characters popping up on their favorite game system. These include such veterans as *Gremlins* and *Mad Max* as well as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and *California Raisins* from more recent history.

Perhaps the most exciting celebrity appearance will be detailed in the next issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. We don't want to give away too much, but we will say one thing: This Sega Genesis game will be a *Thriller!*

Talk to you next month.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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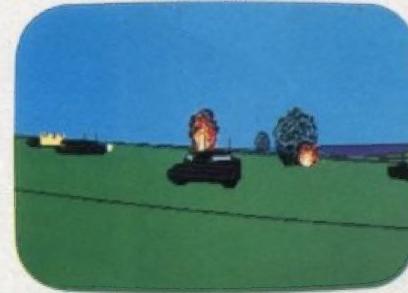
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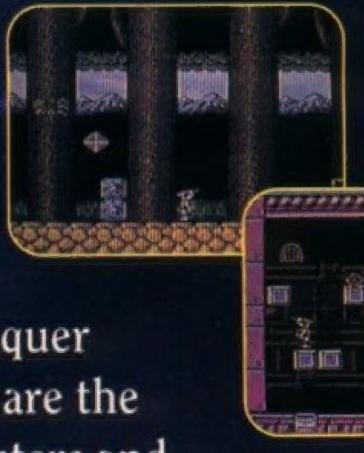
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**Hudson**

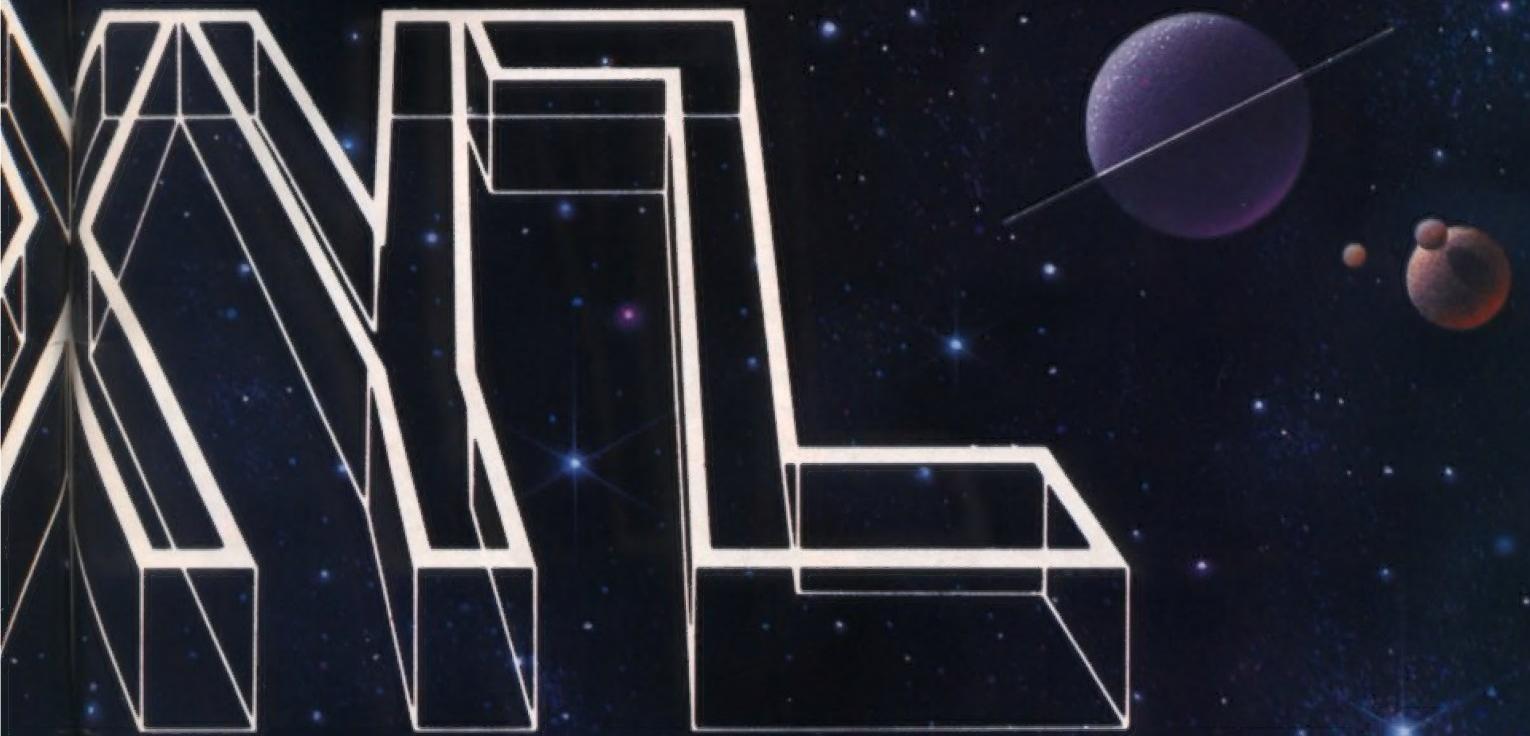


**S P A C E A D**

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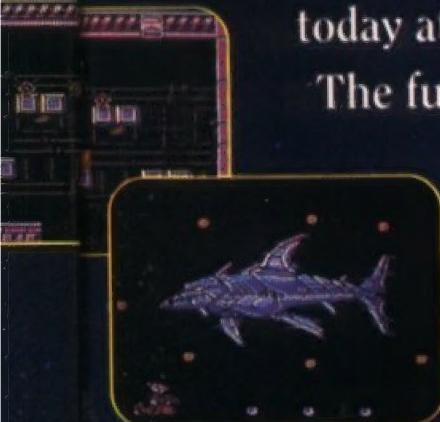
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But be careful. You'll need all your courage and cunning to succeed. Otherwise, the entire human race is doomed to extinction!

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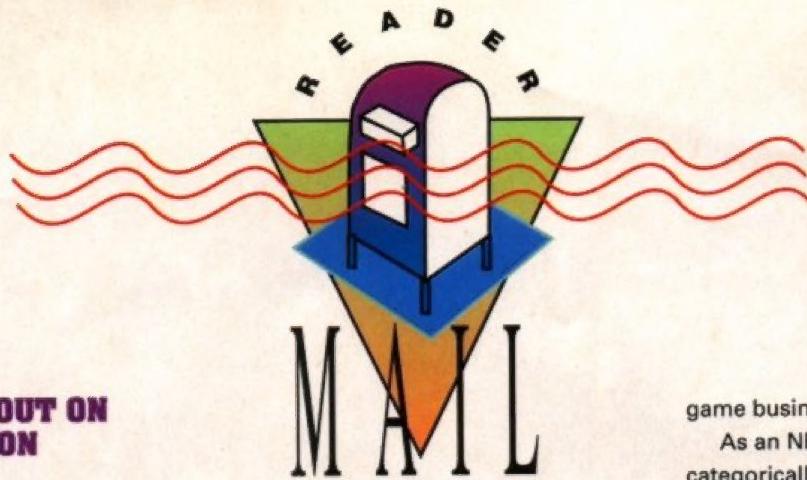
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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



## READERS SPEAK OUT ON NES SITUATION

Dear VG&CE:

Reading your March editorial about Nintendo's bad business practices reminded me of the day I went into my local toy store to buy some games and saw a sign they had posted stating: "We will not be carrying any Tengen games for the NES."

I used to own an NES, but after getting burned once too often by games not nearly worth what I paid for them, I sold the system. There is no doubt about it, Nintendo has a lot of really good software for its system, but I feel the company isn't giving its all to make sure the gaming fans are satisfied. If you ask me, it's just after the money.

—Dan Walimaq

Birmingham, Michigan

Dear VG&CE:

I do feel that Nintendo is restricting fair competition in its manufacture of software. I commend Representative Eckart for scrutinizing Nintendo's business activity as far as its game cartridge costs and availability in the U.S. It does have a monopoly as far as I'm concerned. I would like to see compatible software available [from other sources].

—John P. Stodolka  
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear VG&CE:

I was waiting to see what VG&CE would say about the antitrust suit against Nintendo. I am not against Nintendo and don't want to make this a negative letter but....

People have to speak out against unfair practices in order to preserve the dignity of video games and entertainment value for the masses.

There definitely had to be a hyped-up chip shortage to drum up business and to get the attention of the video-game buyers.

Cartridges were hard to get in Massachusetts and still are. And the prices are not regulated in all stores. Some stores get so many more games, while the little guy can't keep them on the shelves.

There is not, in my opinion, any control on prices. I don't think any video game is worth over \$40. Washington has to set a standard for the video-game industry and regulate prices before they go through the roof. Old games that are two and three years old are at the same high price.

In many stores I see Nintendo everywhere, but where is Sega, Atari, NEC or anyone else who should have the right of free enterprise to sell its wares? The figures for Nintendo speak for themselves, and it's no secret we are talking in the billions.

—Anthony Castiello  
Everett, Massachusetts

Dear VG&CE:

We saw your *Editor's Letter* in the March 1990 issue of VG&CE and want to take you up on your invitation to voice an opinion. We have been involved in the video-game design business since 1982. We do not agree with the proposition that Nintendo's policies have resulted in higher prices and fewer games for video-game players. Quite the contrary, our observation in Toys "R" Us and other stores that sell video games is that Nintendo's policies have led to more and better games coming to market than would have been possible without Nintendo's policies.

We have not seen any honest evidence that retail prices are higher as a direct result of Nintendo's policies. We do not believe changing the system would result in lower prices, but only in more bad games coming to market. And too many bad games is what killed the first video-

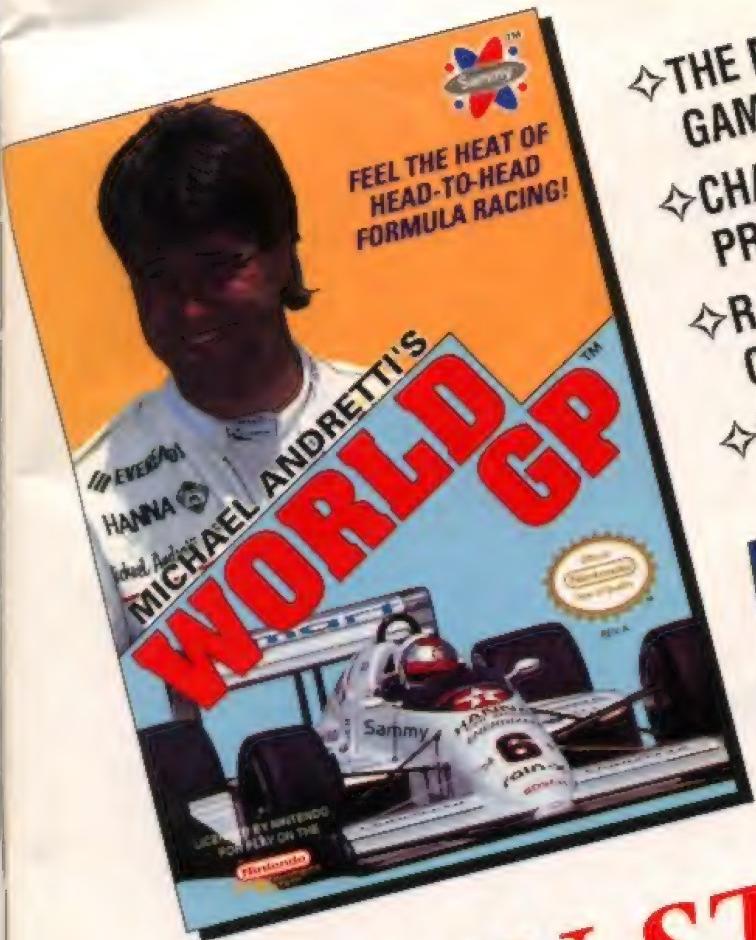
game business in the mid-1980s.

As an NES-licensee company, I can state categorically that Nintendo has no control over, nor even input into, our pricing. Prices are set by each licensee/publisher, based on many factors, including, but not limited to, the amount of time and money it took to develop a game, the cartridge configuration, overhead and marketing costs and competitive pressures. Even though Tengen manufactures its own games and is outside the Nintendo licensee universe, Tengen's games are not less expensive than Nintendo's licensees' games. Sega Genesis games are more expensive than NES games, as are many NEC TurboGrafx-16 games.

In your editorial, you report that because Nintendo games are import items, this drives up their price. As a licensee with experience in importing Nintendo product, I can report that the cost of shipping one cartridge by sea from Japan to the port of Oakland, California, is less than five cents (depending on the value of the yen to the dollar at the time of shipment). This adds approximately twenty cents to the retail price of a game. In contrast, the U.S. government has imposed an import duty of nearly 8 percent on video games. Payment of this tax adds around \$3-\$4 to the retail price of the games. If Congressman Eckart is truly concerned about the price of NES games, he might do well to sponsor legislation lifting the import duty.

Our view of Congressman Eckart and his findings is that his is misdirected political grandstanding without much substance. His entire investigation process was fundamentally unfair. Although he conducted extensive hearings into Nintendo's trade practices that resulted in recommendations being made that the Justice Department

**Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.**



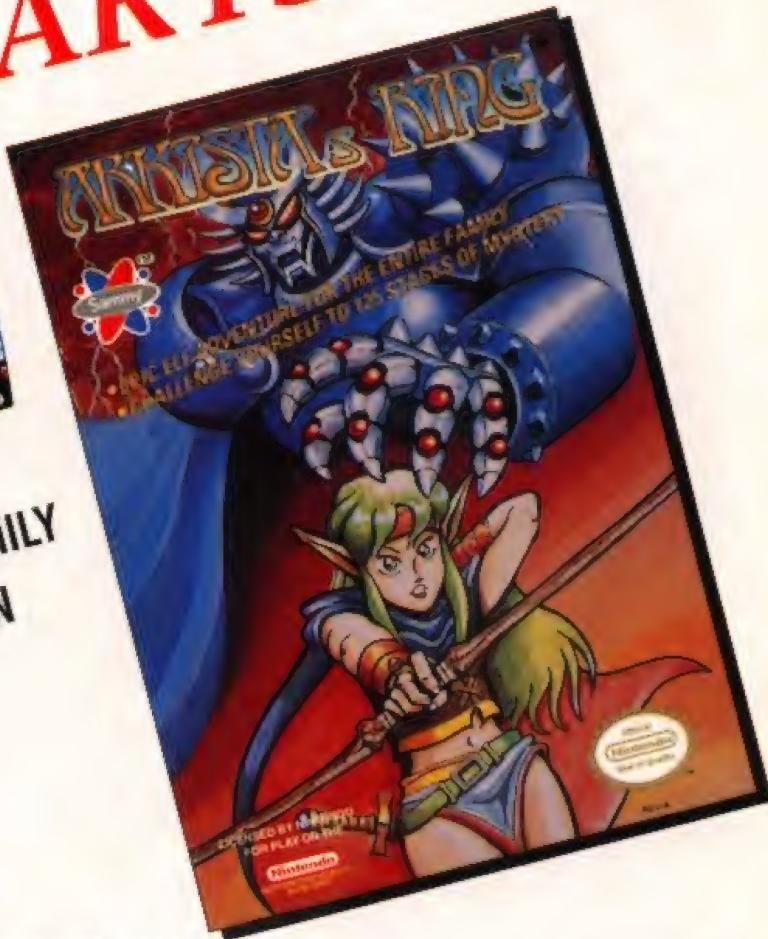
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investigate, only Nintendo's market opponents were allowed to testify. Congressman Eckart did not give Nintendo an opportunity to appear on its own behalf. This was despite a request by Nintendo that it be given the opportunity to testify. In our view, finding Nintendo guilty without giving it a chance to defend itself is decidedly un-American and smacks of tactics used by Senator Joe McCarthy in the 1950s. The Senator from Wisconsin is not generally regarded as a shining role model for U.S. Representatives.

We believe modern video games represent good entertainment value. Development costs of modern games are extremely high. The time and "person power" it takes to design and program a modern video game is staggering.

Because of our desire to attract and hold onto the most creative and resourceful people, we must compete with the toy companies, television producers, motion-picture "special effects" houses, business-software companies (like Lotus and others) and Wall Street brokerage firms for top technical and creative talent. If the best people can't earn a competitive income designing video games, they will move into other fields. If the most talented people move out of video-game design, the quality of the games will drop and the video-game player will lose out.

Nintendo's policies have resulted in a large supply of quality games for its system. Nintendo doesn't need Absolute Entertainment to speak on its behalf. However, we felt positions stated in your *Editor's Letter* were inaccurate and warranted this response.

—James Charne

Vice President, Legal & Business Affairs  
Absolute Entertainment  
Glen Rock, New Jersey

Well, there's no doubt that discussing this issue raises blood pressure all around the country. And while we've made some statements in the past about Nintendo's practices, it's impossible to make a full report on the situation without certain answers, answers that require inside knowledge. Here are some concerns that we have:

• As it's rumored that some of the companies in Nintendo's licensee program are restricted in their output (on a yearly



basis), which companies are allowed to produce more games and why?

• How much do licensees pay to Nintendo, per game, as a licensing fee? (Rumors have put this at somewhere in the area of \$10 per cartridge.)

• Are rumors of intimidating retailers true? (Again, rumors state that many retailers have been pressured against carrying Tengen, Color Dreams, Sega and NEC products.)

• Why can't Nintendo, given its wealth, start a U.S. manufacturing plant? Certainly there are lots of reasons why this should be a reality.

We don't deny that today's games represent a growth from the early days of video games and that they are high in entertainment value. It's just that there have been far too many rumblings of unfair practices for us to shrug off and ignore. And Congressman Eckart's findings, whether they are political grandstanding or not, seem to indicate a problem does exist.

While calls to Nintendo's offices went unreturned, we spoke to Congressman Eckart's subcommittee counsel, who faxed us a copy of a letter that was sent to Howard Lincoln, Nintendo's executive vice president, in December 1989. Though Nintendo claimed, as Charne's letter does, it didn't have an adequate chance to tell its story to Eckart's subcommittee, Eckart's letter notes that the subcommittee was willing to work with Nintendo and spent time on the phone and in person with Nintendo representatives—Hill & Knowlton, its public-relations firm in Washington, D.C.—regarding the concerns that were being raised. According to the letter, one meeting lasted over two hours.

As an update, the investigation has been turned over to the Federal Trade Commission, which started a committee to follow through on Eckart's claims. No further news has come from this investigation at press time.

Given the information at hand, we stand by our statements and welcome Nintendo's comments on this issue.

## AND FURTHERMORE...

Dear VG&CE:

I have an important question to ask, but first I'd like to compliment you on a fine

magazine. The first few issues were sort of generic and unfocused, and I was ready to give up on VG&CE but you've evolved into a first-rate publication.

Anyway, here's the situation. I own three game systems: an Apple II, a Sega Master System and a Nintendo Entertainment System. As game systems evolve and become more complex and efficient, their forefathers are relegated to second-class status. Already the Apple II and SMS are practically dead in the water, and NES—depending on the performance of the new 16-bit machines—could be finished in a few years. I've sunk a small fortune in these machines, and I refuse to give up on them.

Do the makers of these machines realize that they are betraying the public? How can they expect me (and other gamers) to commit to newer, more expensive machines if they plan on yanking the rug out from under us when new products come out? And don't tell me about converters (such as the Genesis and its Power Base Converter). Why on Earth would anyone buy a 16-bit console to play 8-bit games?

Personally, the NES is the final straw. If these guys pull a fast one and go to a 16-bit while abandoning the NES, then I refuse to buy another game system.

—Randall Bodine

Gaithersburg, Maryland

We understand your plight, Randall. Unfortunately, the video-game market has been one of the fastest-moving segments in consumer entertainment. Just as the vinyl record is leaning toward extinction in favor of the CD, progress is moving the video-game world toward 16-bit machines.

Even with that evolution, however, there is no reason that you can't enjoy the systems you have. And we see the Power Base Converter, which allows you to play SMS games on the Genesis, as a viable method of combining the old and the new. If you buy a Genesis, you'll be able to keep and enjoy your current SMS library in addition to tasting what the new technology has to offer. In fact, the rumors abound that the Super Famicom will be backward compatible with the current library of Famicom games—and we expect the same to be true when this machine comes to the U.S.

We don't think that this unfortunate obsolescence is planned, but given the state of consumer electronics, it seems inevitable. ■

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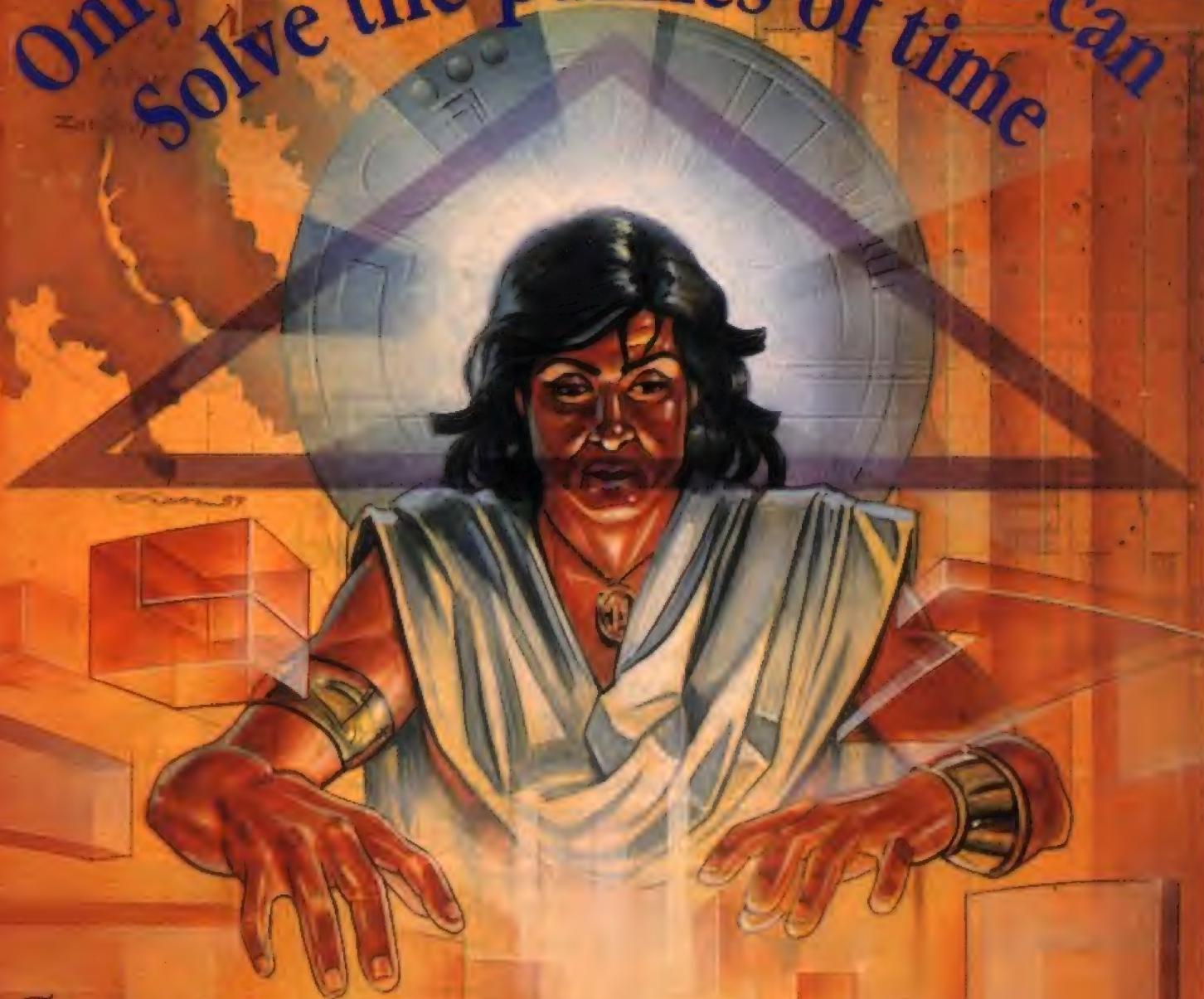
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solve the puzzles of time*



The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

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The editors and staff of **VIDEOGAMES** AND COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT would like to welcome you to a new section, **Tip Sheet**. This section is designed to give you answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to **VG&CE**, **9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Tip Sheet.**



by  
**Donn Nauert**

To kick off this new section we're going to take a look at *Kung-Fu Heroes* by Culture Brain. There's a contest in progress (see *News Bits* on page 24), and we thought we would pass along some tips and strategies that might help you become the winner of the \$10,000 grand prize.

## Basic Strategies

To be able to advance to the high levels, you'll need to master a few of these moves:

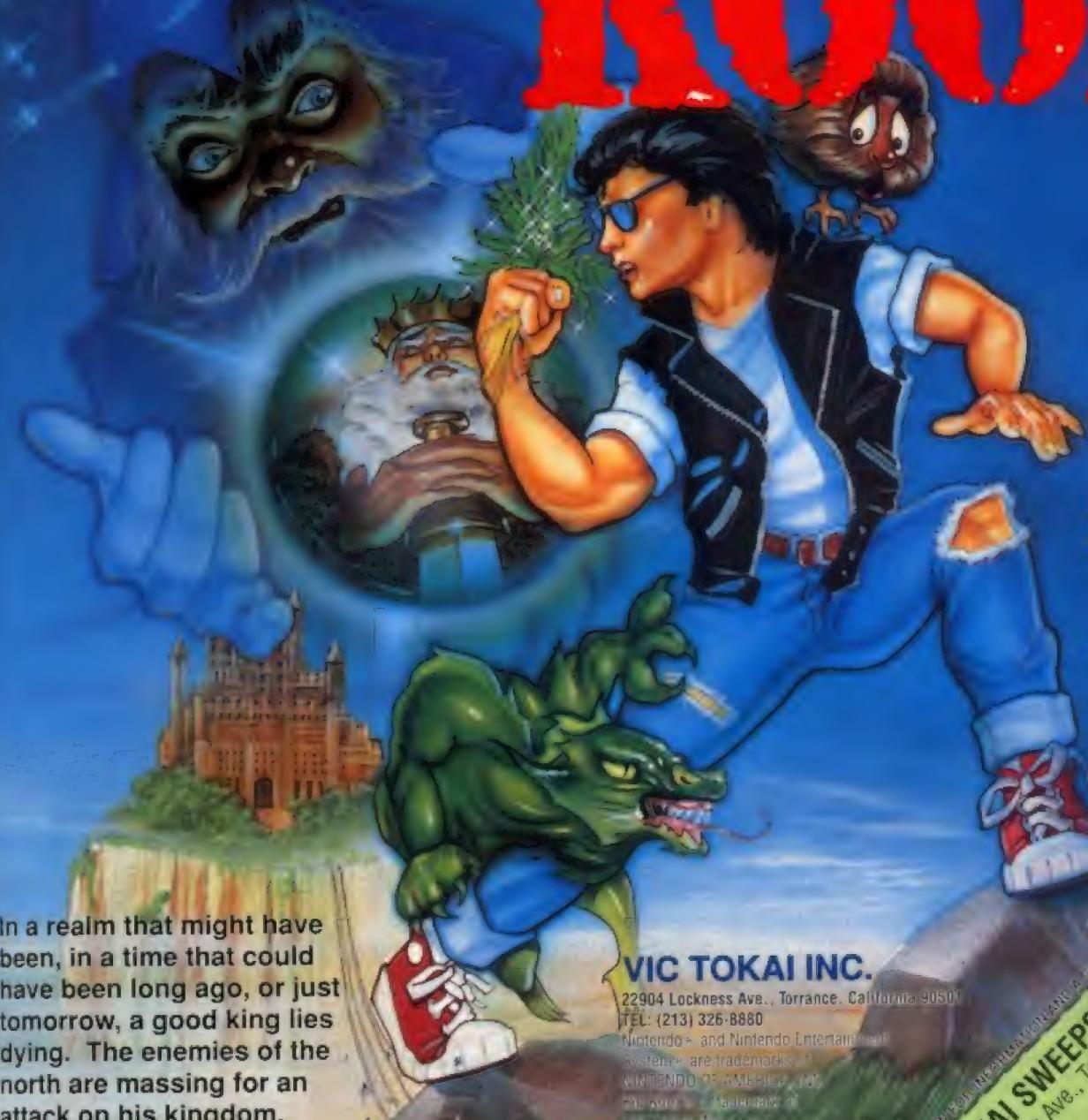
- To increase your punching ability you'll need to collect a "punch-up" (a closed fist). After collecting two punch-ups, you'll be able to throw an iron punch. This punch is good for some of the stronger enemies, such as bison commandos. If

you collect a third punch-up, you obtain the speed punch. This is the strongest punch both characters can have. It would be a good idea to get this as quickly as possible by



EXPERIENCE THE REALM OF FANTASY

# KID KOOL



In a realm that might have been, in a time that could have been long ago, or just tomorrow, a good king lies dying. The enemies of the north are massing for an attack on his kingdom.

The good king's sorceror has been searching for magic and out of desperation pulls a rockin' rebel from the eighties back in time. Kid Kool is sent on a quest to help retrieve the seven wonder herbs, the only hope to save the king.

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collecting the treasure boxes.

At the beginning of the game you start off with the moonsault kick. To use the kick, hold the control pad in the desired direction and press the B button. This is the weakest of kicks and should be used to defeat weak enemies or escape from the slower enemies.

The ultimate kick, the miracle kick, gives you more power and allows you to kick farther across the screen. After collecting the "K" to perform the move, get as many treasure boxes as you can. Each one will add to the number of kicks available to you, which is shown at the top of the screen. To use the kick, press the "B" button and immediately press the control pad in the direction you want to go. The key to success here is timing.

## Special Techniques

The easiest method of defeating the various enemies is to attack from the back or side. Enemies such as kung-fu commandos and Spear Man are difficult to defeat in frontal attacks, especially when you use punches or the moonsault kick. Hide behind the different rocks that can be found on the rounds, and when the enemy appears, unleash a deadly barrage of punches and kicks. I don't use kicks against kicks or punches against punches. If an enemy throws a punch at you, you should counter

with a kick. Conversely, if the enemy kicks you, just throw a series of punches.

Teamwork is an important element in this game. Since all obtained items—yes, even "1-Ups"—will be distributed to both players, one player should collect the items while the other fights. Be sure to protect each other against the enemies. If you see that your partner is out of



position for a fight, rush over and help out. You might assign one player to fight and one to concentrate on smashing rocks to find hidden items. It would be a good idea to let the more skilled player be the fighter, so both players can advance more smoothly.

After one player obtains the key, both players should go to the door leading to the

bonus stage. The stairs will remain open briefly, so be quick. Once both are in the bonus stage, collect as many "E" balls as possible. Collect five "E" balls and both players will gain an extra man.

Be on the lookout for "G" balls. The player that collects one of these will have the ability to shoot the enemy with gun balls. In the 2-player mode only the player that collects this weapon can use it. Each shot that hits an enemy will weaken it, allowing the other player to move in for an easier kill. Be sure to take advantage of the gun balls whenever you can, because the enemy can't use beam weapons when you have this firepower.

To get an invincibility of sorts, collect six money bags hidden under rocks and blocks that you've smashed. Then press the "A" and "B" buttons at the same time and a "P" ball (or power ball) will appear. Collect this ball, and every enemy on the screen will turn pale. Simply touch the pale enemies once to get rid of them for good.

If you're playing *Kung-Fu Heroes* for the first time, be sure to read the instruction booklet. It might give you some additional tips.

Remember, even though one player's game may be over, the remaining player can still play and add to his overall score. ■

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\* N for Nintendo Entertainment System and F for Sega, Atari, Amstrad and Commodore game systems.

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## Late Breaking News Story! Montana Signs Video-Game Deal With Sega

Joe Montana, quarterback for the 1989 World Champion San Francisco 49ers football team, has signed a multi-million dollar agreement with Sega to develop "the ultimate football video game." The deal, announced at a San Francisco press conference on March 22, 1990, holds the distinctions of being Montana's largest licensing contract as well as the heaviest celebrity endorsement for a video game ever signed.

"Sega was my first choice in creating the greatest football video game," Montana was quoted as saying. "Genesis has the advanced graphics and power to accurately create the real look, moves and excitement of professional football."

"This agreement will send a clear message to game players everywhere: You can't do Joe Montana on Nintendo," Michael Katz, Sega's Consumer Products Division president noted. "We are honored to create a 16-bit video game worthy of his name."

Actually, the arrangement goes beyond video games to include the Montana name being added to arcade games, computer software and portable games. No further details, other than the planned Genesis game, were announced.

The Montana endorsement is yet another sign of Sega's aggressive licensing strategy, which has included the signing of deals

with Michael Jackson (for a *Moonwalker* video game) and Walt Disney Films (games based on the upcoming *Dick Tracy* movie, *Fantasia* and Mickey and Minnie Mouse).

### Tank Killer Gets Add-On Module

Dynamix has readied an add-on campaign module for *A-10: Tank Killer*. The one-disk add-on, Simulation Module #1, adds seven new missions to the original program.

The module will not be available through retail stores; it can be ordered direct from Dynamix for \$12.95 (call them at [503] 687-8690) or can be downloaded from the Dynamix Bulletin Board for no cost. Modem owners can reach the BBS at (503) 687-8497.



### Defender Creator Turns to Rome

Kellyn Beeck, creator of the mega-hit *Defender of the Crown* (Cinemaware) has joined with Evan and Nicky

Robinson for a trip back in time to the days of Imperial Rome. The result is *Centurion: Defender of Rome* (EA).



The game requires diplomatic skills—as the player negotiates with tribes—and battlefield leadership when negotiations fail. Seafaring skills include catapults, ship ramming and deckside hand-to-hand combat. The player launches ships and raises legions, builds stadiums and holds gladiatorial games. These games include chariot races and fights to the death.

*Centurion: Defender of Rome* is available for IBM PC and compatibles, from Electronic Arts.

### Atari Opens Line for Product Orders

Atari has started up a toll-free number for consumers to order Lynx and Portfolio (Atari's pocket-sized IBM PC-compatible computer) products. The number is (800) 443-8020, and it prompts you to enter codes from your touch-tone phone to get information or place an order for Atari products.

Since its introduction in November 1989 new software releases for the Lynx have been sparse, but a spokesperson for Atari claims that by the end of 1990, there will be a total of 25 games available for the high-powered color portable game system.

### New Program Saves Games, Scores

North Shore Systems' *Stay Around* loads into a PC, then makes it possible to suspend programs and automatically return to them at the exact point where you left off. The product makes it possible to suspend up to 16 applications at one time and even power-down before returning. When the computerist returns to the program, it remembers where you were and holds the score and other factors in memory. It works equally well for spreadsheets and other applications, as well as gaming programs.

*Stay Around* is available from many retailers or direct from North Shore Systems,

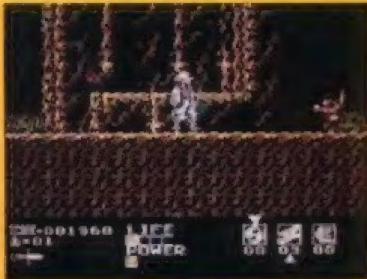
# MASTER THE POWER

IN A LAND OF IMPOSSIBLE EVILS . . .

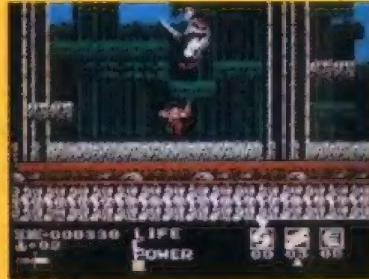
the classic struggle between good and evil comes to life. Mixed with magic and the latest computer technology, a spell-binding game for your Nintendo Entertainment System® is born!

As the hero warrior Victar, you will battle Wizards, Troglodytes, and Undead Souls. Master 7 levels and 3 worlds in your quest to conquer the demons of the Dark Lord. Traverse chasms of fire and mountains of doom to confront the fiendish Gatekeeper.

Actual Nintendo Entertainment System Screens



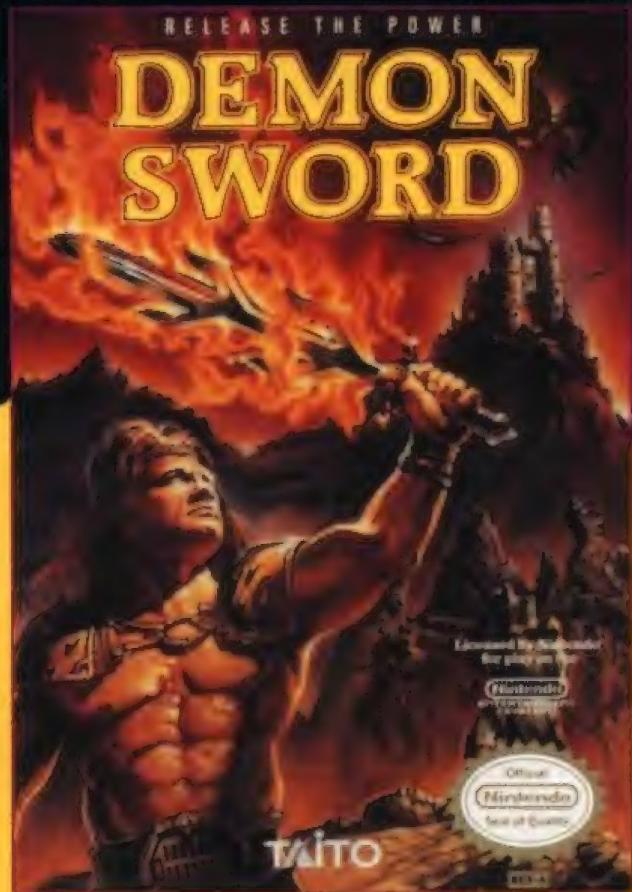
Beware the wrath of the Old Wizard of Cedar Mountain.



Brave the broken bridges and terrify-ing chasms of Bamboo Forest.



The magic of the Phoenix can save your life!



## RISK IT ALL

With cunning and skill you wield the ancient and broken Demon Sword™. To defeat the evil forces ruling the land, you must recover the Sword's missing pieces and restore its mystical power. The journey is long and the way is hard. Gather your courage, grasp your blade, and release the power that is yours to control!

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which can be reached at (818) 248-1711.

### Top Coin-Ops of February 1990

Figures courtesy of *Replay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

#### Best Upright Videos

1. *TMNT (Turtles)* by Konami
2. *Cyberball 2072* by Atari
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *All American Football* by Leland
5. *Off Road* by Leland
6. *Team Quarterback* by Leland
7. *Midnight Resistance* by Data East
8. *S.T.U.N. Runner* by Atari
9. *Operation Thunderbolt* by Taito
10. *S.C.I.* by Taito

#### Best Coin-Op Software

1. *U. N. Squadron* by Capcom
2. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
3. *Buster Bros.* by Capcom
4. *Caliber-50* by Romstar
5. *Golden Axe* by Sega
6. *Toki* by Fabtek
7. *Tecmo World Cup '90* by Tecmo
8. *AmeriDarts* by AmeriCorp.
9. *Vs. Crime Fighters* by Konami
10. *Task Force* by American Sammy

#### Best New Uprights

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *Beast Busters* by SNK
3. *Galaxy Force* by Sega

#### Coin Groups Go to Washington

At press time (early March), members of AMOA and AAMA (professional trade groups for the coin-op industry) are planning visits to the nation's capitol on May 1 to lobby congressmen on behalf of the dollar coin. The coin-op groups will sponsor a congressional reception for lawmakers and their families to play games,

listen to jukeboxes and participate in tournaments of electronic pinball, basketball and dart games. A vote is expected later this year in congress on the subject of the new dollar coin.

#### Ishido Stones Accolade

Publishing International's *Ishido Stones*, the creation of designer Michael Feinberg, programmer Ian Gilman and producer Brad Fregger, will soon be available under the Accolade label. Until now, the stone-matching contest was only commercially available through a 1,000-copy autographed limited edition of the Macintosh version, packed in a handmade, customized wooden box.

A mass-market version of *Ishido Stones* was delayed in getting to the public. The game was first slated for publication by Epyx, but after its reorganization, a new publisher had to be found. Accolade expects to release the Macintosh version immediately, with IBM and Amiga versions to follow shortly.

*Ishido* features beautifully drawn playing stones—strategically placed on a board—plus graphic editors for creating new game pieces and backgrounds. It also contains a divination technique called Oracle of the Stones, based on the I-Ching.

#### Nintendo Opens German Branch

Nintendo will open a subsidiary in West Germany this year, to assume responsibility for marketing, sales and distribution of NES and Game Boy products.

Nintendo plans to develop the West German market for its products. In addition to the NES and its line of game cartridges, Nintendo will also introduce the Game Boy portable system to Germany.

The company has not yet established the location for

the West German offices, but expects to open in midyear.

#### Tandy, Britannica Join on CD Encyclopedia

Tandy Corp. and Britannica Software will soon join together to release a computerized encyclopedia for use on its new 2500 XL computer. The new machine features a built-in CD drive. The *Compton*

*Encyclopedia*, published by Britannica for school-age children, will be contained on a single 5.25" CD disk.

The new encyclopedia will contain the full 26 volumes of *Comptons*, which include 15,000 photographs, 5,800 maps and charts and 60 minutes of music. The programmers estimate that the data contained on the CD disk would fill 18,000 floppies.

The *Compton* disk will display pictures and sounds related to the subject, such as composers' music and notable speeches. It will also contain a full atlas, history time line plus a browser's picture file.

#### Hints for Gamers Lost in Las Vegas

Mindscape has just the thing for any gamer stuck in *Déjà Vu II: Lost in Las Vegas*. The hint book provides guidance for all the locations in the game, in three levels. Each hint contains three answers, each more explicit than the last, so that gamers can use only the tips they actually need without getting so much information that it destroys their enjoyment of the adventure.

The hint book was prepared by Icom Simulations, creators of the game. It's available direct from Mindscape for \$5.



#### Konami Features Coin-Ops in Handhelds

Konami's new line of handheld games feature titles made famous in coin-op arcades and in Konami's and Ultra's NES games. Games reduced to fist size



are housed in Konami's casing, which features four push-button controllers and direction rosettes.

Titles currently featured in the handheld line are *Double Dribble*, *Top Gun*, *Gradius*, *Contra*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Skate or Die*, and this year's newest games, *Bayou Billy* and *Bottom of the Ninth*.



# SHARK ATTACK!

Only you and your P-40 Tiger Shark stand between your buddies and oblivion. Trapped behind enemy lines, the enemy is trying to nail you with everything they've got—fighters, tanks, battleships, anti-aircraft guns...

But you can handle it. You're the best stick man in the sky. So check your six o'clock and man your guns. The Sky Shark's got the moves if you've got the guts.

*"Sky Shark... moves so fast, the enemy targets are so numerous, and the graphics so vivid..."*

—Game Players Guide to Nintendo Games

*"...a scrolling shoot-'em-up that combines furious action with good graphics to provide an exciting gaming experience."*

—Video Games and Computer Entertainment



Actual Nintendo Entertainment System Screens



Battleships track you and lay down a carpet of deadly fire!



Danger below! Watch out for a sudden ambush!



Company at 12 o'clock. Get them before they get you!



Keep an eye out for heavy flak from camouflaged guns...

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## Newsletter for Amiga Gamers

TGFM Publishing, located on Maui Island, Hawaii, has started a newsletter for Amiga users. *Amiga Games Guide* contains reviews, news, rumors and game tips for American and European Amiga games and is published on a bimonthly schedule.

Amigans can get a sample issue for \$3 or a six-issue subscription for \$15 from *Amiga Games Guide*, P.O. Box 11945, Lahaina, HI 96761.

## Culture Brain Seeks Kung Fu Heroes

Culture Brain is sponsoring a tournament this summer to find high scorers on their NES-compatible game, *Kung Fu Heroes*. The contest promotes team play; two gamers must work to reach the highest score, then send a photograph of the game screen to the company.

There are two categories for the competition, family and general. In the family category, one or both players must be 13 or under as of March 31, 1990. In the general category, both players must be over 13.

The first-place team in each group will receive \$10,000; second place is \$3,000 and third and fourth places each win \$1,000. The top four teams in each category will win an overnight, expense-paid trip to Disneyland to compete in the finals.

To enter, teams must select their proper entry category, then submit their names, addresses, ages, birthdates and telephone numbers, together with a photograph of the game screen showing the high score. Send the information to Culture Brain Champions Tournament, 15315 NE 90th, Redmond, WA 98052: Entries must be received before August 31.

## Video Offer for Crusaders

Lucasfilm has a special offer for gamers. Customers who purchase an *Indiana Jones* game are entitled to buy a copy of the VHS videotape of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* for \$10. Customers who buy two Indy games will receive the video free.

Customers who purchase one or more *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* games, either *Indy—The Graphic Adventure* or *Indy—The Action Game*, are eligible as long as the purchases were made between February 1, 1990, and June 30, 1990. Details are available at participating retailers.

## Tengen Gifts Hospitals With Video Games

Tengen has instituted a charity program called "Miles of Smiles" that is certain to put big grins on the faces of many sick children. The software company donated gift packages to 12 pediatric oncology/hematology clinics.

The company targeted children's cancer treatment units in Atlanta, Boston,

All of the hospitals that received the gaming equipment and NES-compatible cartridges have a minimum of 20 patients, and the equipment will be available for use by both hospitalized and outpatients.

Dan Van Elderen, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Tengen, explained the company's reason for the giveaway: "These children must spend long hours at the hospital while they undergo treatment. It was our desire to provide an enjoyable diversion for these children...."

A big VG&CE salute: Way to go, Tengen!

## InfoMaster Provides In-Store Sales Aids

Sellectek, Inc., has installed InfoMaster systems in over 400 Software Etc. stores, Electronics Boutiques and Waldensoft stores, to make software shopping easier for both purchaser and vendor. The new system, consisting of a '386 computer with hard disk, VGA graphics, modem and printer, provides information

software, through a series of menus. Once the computerist chooses the product, InfoMaster presents a comprehensive listing, which includes a product summary that completely describes the software, any awards or endorsements it may have received, main features, specs, level of difficulty, add-ons, compatible programs and other relevant information. These summaries can be printed out for the customer to take home. Screen shots are also included to depict the look and feel of the software.

A billboard feature functions as an attract mode and presents in-store advertising or information about promotions and discounts. Sellectek upgrades the information in the system each month, via modem, to keep all the data current.

According to Sellectek, the system gained great acceptance in December 1989, its first month of operation. During that month each InfoMaster station received over 2,000 accesses per store.

## Commodore to Market Amiga Game Machine

According to VG&CE's sources, Commodore will market an Amiga-based game machine before the end of the year. Although the company is tight-lipped about the new system, inside sources relate that the machine will be based on the Amiga 500 microprocessor. It will be sold without a keyboard (though the keyboard can be purchased separately) and with a 3.5" disk drive, auxiliary CD-player and Amiga monitor.

No word yet on what the computer game machine will cost nor when Commodore plans to release it to market, but VG&CE will keep readers informed as soon as further details are available.

Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Each location received a Nintendo Entertainment System and all 11 of Tengen's video-game titles.

on-screen about products for customers to examine at their leisure.

Software shopping has never been easier than with this new system. Users search for product information by name, by publisher or by category of

# REALISTIC KUNG-FU ACTION RETURNS!

SUPER REAL KUNG-FU GAME.

# FLYING DRAGON

You'll face the toughest challengers from six different styles of fighting, at the World Tournament of Contact Sports.

The gong has sounded. Now it's up to you to become the World Champion.



The refined game play and sophisticated action will leave you breathless with excitement. When it comes to realistic kung-fu games, there's only one champion—FLYING DRAGON.



### 1. MANY SECRETS AWAITS YOU!

Set forth on a journey to regain the Secret Scrolls and the hidden techniques they hold.

### 2. THE POWER OF JUSTICE

Only by completing the mandara seal can you gain its mystical powers and defeat Dargon, the lord of the Tusk Soldiers.

### 3. TRAINING SESSION

Start your training at Shorinji, the legendary birthplace of Kung-Fu.

### 4. DEFEAT THE SOLDIERS FROM DARKNESS

It's Dargon, and he's transformed into a deadly opponent! You'll need the ultimate move, the Hiryu-no-Ken kick, to knock him down!

### 5. YOU WILL BE A HERO!

Fight your way through the World Tournament of Contact Sports. Victory will be in your hands.



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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# YOU COULD BE THE CHAMPION

## THE CULTURE BRAIN WORLD

A BIG CHANCE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Enter Culture Brains Kung-Fu Heroes nationwide tournament and win the grand prize.

Even those who aren't as skilled will have a chance to win. This tournament is not only for the game maniacs but for any family members. The champions will be selected from two categories: family and general groups.



## CHAMPIONS TOURNAMENT

You are the torchbearers of the video game culture which is to be transmitted to the next generation.

Send Culture Brain a screen shot of the highest scores your team can get.

Please enter one of two categories:

A. Family Category

If your team includes at least one person who is 12 years or under, enter this category. It is not necessary that you are family members.

B. General Category

If both of you are 13 years or over, you must enter this category.

2. Play Kung-Fu Heroes with the 2 player mode.

Send a screen shot picture of your team's highest scores to Culture Brain.

In the screen shot, both scores must be visible.

3. There will be four teams from each category. For a total of eight teams. Sixteen people in all will be selected for the finals in the order of their scores.

4. The top eight teams will be invited to the finals in Los Angeles.

The finals will be performed by the blocks. Prizes for both categories will be awarded as follows: the first-prize winners will be awarded \$10,000.00, the second-prize winners will receive \$3,000.00, the third and fourth-prize winners will receive \$1,000.00.

In the event of a tie, there will be a playoff to determine who will proceed to the finals.

5. All the finalists will stay overnight in Los Angeles and will be taken to Disney Land as an extra prize.

6. The selected teams for the finals will be directly notified by Culture Brain.

\* To enter either category, one adult or guardian must accompany the minor to the finals.

The date for the finals will be announced by Culture Brain.

If a team can not make it to the finals, it will be disqualified.

\* Air fare and hotel expenses for the finals will be provided by Culture Brain.

7. \*Don't reach the 100 million mark.

\* The highest score you can get with this game is 99,999,999.

If you go over 4, the score will reset and start at 0, and the points you have gotten will be invalid.

\* When you get near 99,999,999 points, play carefully so that you don't reset the score by exceeding 99,999,999.

To enter:  
Please write down the following information on a piece of paper and send it along with a screen shot to Culture Brain.  
- entry category  
- your name  
- address  
- age  
- birth date  
- telephone number

Please print your names, addresses, phone numbers on the back of the screen shot, also.



Send to:  
Culture Brain  
Champions Tournament Dept.

15315 N.E. 90th Redmond WA 98052

Tournament period:

Mail received before August 31, 1990  
will be valid.

\* During the contest period, you can enter the tournament as many times as you want.

\* We are not liable for unreceived mail.

\* Teams who enter for the family category must include a person who is under 12 years old as of March 31, 1990.

\* Any screen shots under the following conditions will be disqualified:

- Screen shots that have been tampered with.

- Screen shots that are not readable.

- Screen shots that do not have the scores visible.



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# PION OF THE U.S.!

The tournament is planned for the entire family to enjoy. So come and join the challenge!

WAAOOOO...  
**\$10,000!**

The first-prize winners from each category

will be awarded \$10,000.00.

The second-prize winners from each class will be awarded \$3,000.00.

The third and fourth-prize winners from each category will be awarded \$1,000.00.

If one or both of you are 12 years or under, enter the family category.

If both of you are 13 years or over, enter the general category.

Entry details are available on the board game, which will be given away at participating retail stores.

Mm, I will enter the tournament, too!



## IN ADDITION TO THE TOURNAMENT, THERE IS MORE!

Receive a board game and win more prizes!

Everyone has another chance to win even if you don't enter the tournament.

## STEP 1 GIVE AWAYS.

The limited edition of the Kung-Fu Heroes board games and buttons will be given away at the participating retail stores. Look for display posters.

## STEP 2 WIN PRIZES.

Answer the quiz on the board game and send it to Culture Brain, you could win the deluxe prize by a random drawing!



Anything and everything about this campaign is great!

Prizes are subject to change without any notice.

For further information, please look for details on give away board games.

Give aways are limited in quantity at each store. Ask for more details at the participating retail stores.

The campaign is sponsored by Culture Brain. For more details, please inquire only through our ads in most game magazines or display posters on give away board games at participating retail stores. Please no inquiries by phone.

 TM  
**CULTURE BRAIN**

CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



# THE PERFECT SIMULATOR

Only Baseball Simulator 1.000 lets you play ball any way you want it. It's fully programmable baseball unlike any other game.

#### Complete Editing

Start with a full team of 12 batters and six pitchers. Then, you decide what kind of team to make. Enter the exact stats you want for a winning team. Use the latest major league stats, make an all-star team, even enter yourself as the star. With six programmable teams, you'll have a whole league of your own.

#### Intense and Realistic Action

Make a team of quick runners for a fast-paced game. Create players with awesome power for an all-out Home Run Derby. Or give your team the hottest hurlers for an intense pitching game. No matter what kind of game you want to play, it's all possible.

#### Television Season Simulation

With the Full-Auto Season, you can play out a continuous season and watch your team from game to game. Even individual players can be tracked with full stats and top-10 rankings. Go for the triple crown!



TEAM	NAME	PCT
A	Star	0.600
B	Red Sox	0.600
C	Blue Jays	0.600
D	Yankees	0.600
E	Reds	0.600
F	Giants	0.600

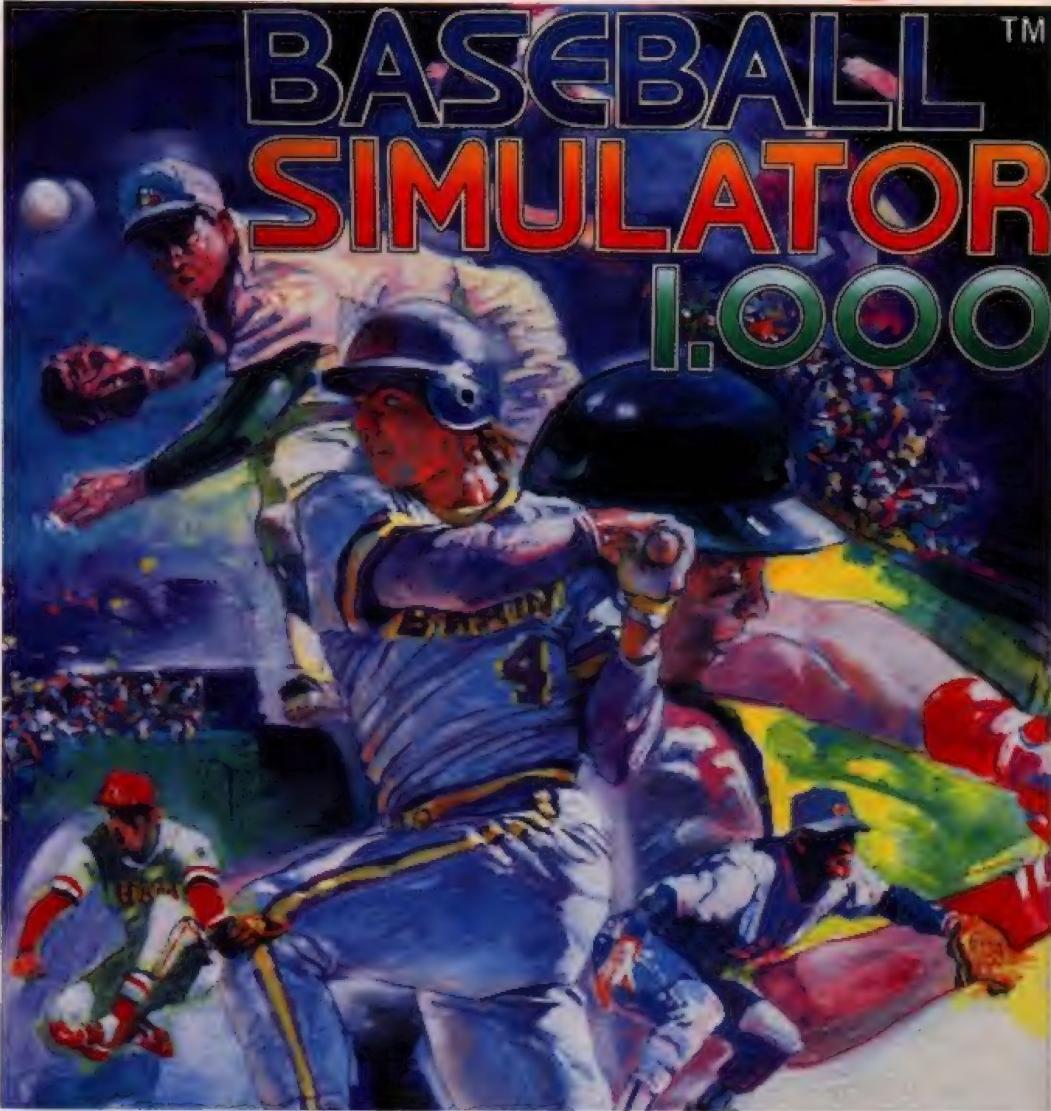


#### ① FULL EDITING FOR UP TO SIX TEAMS.

Play ball with your favorite major league stars, heroes from the past, fantasy leagues—even enter yourself as the star! Enter team and player names, and all the important stats for your very own team.

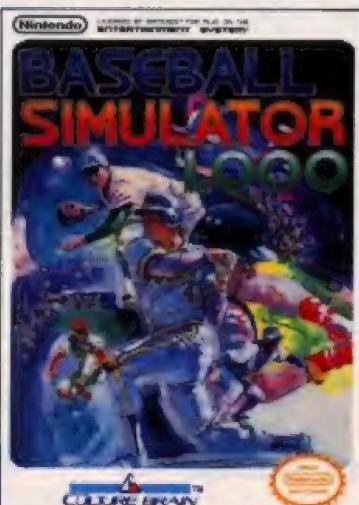
#### ② A COMPLETE, SIX-TEAM, 165-GAME PENNANT RACE.

Play a full length season with six teams, for 5, 30, 60, or even 165 games. Follow the teams and players through the season—monitor their stats, even get top-10 rankings in batting and pitching.



#### ③ THE HILARIOUS FEATURES OF ULTRA PLAY.

Add a whole new dimension of fun to baseball with the wacky Ultra Plays. Throw pitches that disappear or speed up in mid-air. Fight back with hits that explode or knock out the fielders. And catch them by leaping hundreds of feet in the air. With the six teams of the Ultra League, you'll play baseball like it's never been played before!



An action adventure from the Arabian Nights.



*Sophisticated  
Action  
Adventure*

*The ancient land of Arabia has fallen into despair. The evil magician Sabaron has released his demons from the underground, and now they are about to take over a once-beautiful land.*

*You have lost your memory, but you are the descendant of the legendary magician, Isfa. Now it is time to return to Arabia. You must fight to defend peace and unravel puzzling mysteries to save the kidnapped princess Scheherazade.*

*You and your allies will travel throughout the beautiful and mysterious land of Arabia, through the future and the past, and to worlds of water, deserts, forests and flowers. It's a grand adventure waiting to be fulfilled.*



Raise your strength with an assortment of swords, magical rods, and special items.



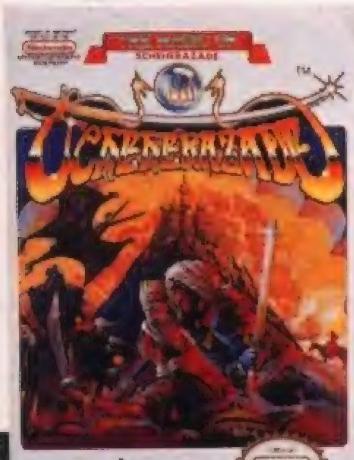
Magical spells come to life on the screen in winds of fire and storms of electricity.



Giant enemies fill the screen and challenge you to battle.



An encounter with the enemy! Create a battle formation with your allies, then fight it out with powerful magic!



**1 FIVE CHAPTERS OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY,  
OVER 750 DAZZLING SCREENS.**

Unprecedented scale, challenging puzzles, and intense combat, unlike anything else. And a finale full of awe and wonder. The world of Scheherazade is an adventure full of glory.

**2 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ENHANCES THE GAME EVEN MORE!**

With the support of the Artificial Intelligence programming, even beginning players can enter the magical world of Scheherazade and behold its wonders.

**3 MAGICAL BATTLES WITH ELEVEN ALLIES!**

Seek out your trusty companions and invoke an astonishing variety of magical spells. Through the past and the future, you are the hero, battling the sinister forces of evil.

**4 GRAPHICS AND SOUND FROM A WORLD OF FANTASY!**

With stunningly beautiful visuals and a musical soundtrack that will captivate your imagination, The Magic of Scheherazade is a gaming experience that'll leave you spellbound!

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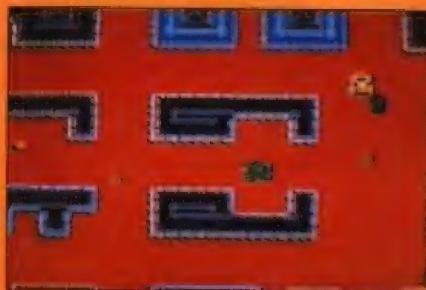


French philosopher René Descartes, who some consider the father of modern philosophy, believed there were only two substances that made up a person: the mind and the body. Descartes also felt that everything touching our senses is



nothing more than the mind's perception of the object, thus his theory that "I think, therefore I am." Color, odors, temperature and pain are simply examples of things that exist in our minds for the sake of our bodies.

It's conceivable, then, to think that dreams represent a great deal more than just what takes place when you sleep. What if a dream could become reality, given that reality is nothing more than what your mind feeds to your body?



Imagine: You wake up one day to find that your whole life, as you know it, is just a dream. A dream implanted in your brain by a Martian government agency for whom you previously worked. Later, you discover that you were, in fact, fighting for the bad guys. As you try to discover exactly who and what you were—and are—you're being chased by wave after wave of government agents. Even your beautiful wife turns out to be an agent whose assignment is to make sure you've forgotten *everything* of your past. The agency is just being careful, because it can't take any chances that you'll talk about what's going on back on Mars.

This is the premise for the futuristic movie thriller, *Total Recall*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ronny Cox, Michael Ironside and Sharon Stone and directed by Paul Verhoeven (*RoboCop*). This special-effects bonanza, set in the year 2084, will thrill fans of fast-paced action. The exciting news is that this film, which will debut in theaters June 15, will also be released shortly by Acclaim, for the Nintendo Entertainment System. The cartridge, programmed by veteran Brian Fargo and his Interplay Productions (*Battle Chess*), features all of the excitement that's destined to appear in the silver-screen version.

VG&CE had the opportunity to sneak a peek at both the NES game and the script for the film, and we

## Acclaim Brings Arnold Schwarzenegger's Film Role to Video-Game Screens

promise you will not be disappointed. The ten levels encompassing *Total Recall* will test any gamer's mettle.

### Following Arnie

The Acclaim version of *Total Recall* follows the movie fairly accurately. Here's a rundown of what we saw (though this wasn't the final version; therefore, the completed game may be different):

Your character, Quaid, played by Schwarzenegger in the movie, first hits the street, where he faces various lethal adversaries. Here Quaid will find,



among other dangers, gunmen popping out of trash cans, agents jumping out of windows and midgets pulling him into dark alleys.

Though Richter, the lead agent in the quest for Quaid, is hot on the trail, Quaid turns to the sanctuary of his apartment. To his surprise, his wife Lori turns a gun on him. If Quaid can subdue her before Richter appears at the doorway, he'll have the opportunity to hightail it out.

Quaid heads out for the subway, but before he arrives, he has to get through



by Andy Eddy,  
with Donn Nauert



the X-ray scanner that searches for weapons. Forgetting that he's carrying the gun he took from his double-crossing wife in the apartment, alarms go off, and gunmen and bullet-firing globes must be defeated before he blasts through the glass and runs for the subway.

Like New York's often perilous subway, this underground isn't a scene of tranquility. More machine-gun-toting agents as well as guard dogs



await our man. Power canisters, which boost Quaid's life line, sit atop the idle subway train, but they certainly aren't there for the taking: Soldiers trained in martial arts will leap out to stop any potential rebels.

When you finally defeat all opponents in the subway station, you hop the train that transports you to the cement factory. While in search of the suitcase that will enable him to discover more about his quest, Quaid encounters some tough rail-riding hobos and wrecking balls dropping from the ceiling. Reaching his goal, Quaid will have to defeat the main

hobo, who tosses a mean boomerang hat, before receiving his suitcase.

The suitcase contains, among other things, a shuttle ticket for Mars, where his hectic adventure continues. At the spaceport, he meets more guards and hovering robot-bomber drones, both out for blood.

At this point, the perspective changes from scrolling arcade action to an overhead driving scenario.

The narrow streets are filled with other threatening vehicles and dangerous marksmen.

We're nearly there, but some of the hardest battles are yet to be faced. On the Martian streets, Quaid is confronted by boomerang-throwing characters, weird animals and shuriken-tossing women.

Now off the streets and into the mines, Quaid must deal with a slew of strange underground creatures, such as animated skeletons and gigantic leaping frogs. The scene requires some sharp shooting by Quaid, but also careful jumps to small platforms.

Traveling deeper into the planet, Quaid is accosted by a squad of soldiers as well as a hovering laser gunman. The section's finale pits Quaid against Benny, who has taken the wheel of a mechanical mole drill.

Finally, Quaid has reached his destination: the ancient reactor under the planet's surface. To activate it, though, he has to defeat his former

boss, Cohaagan, and the end could very well be near.

## Behind the Scenes

As with most major motion pictures, the video-game project has been in the works for quite a while. Carolco, the company behind *Rambo*, another movie that Acclaim turned into a video game,



offered Acclaim a shot at the *Total Recall* project. "We first were attracted to the project not just because of Schwarzenegger," Sam Goldberg, Acclaim's vice-president of marketing informed us, "but for the screenplay as well. After we read the script, we realized that it was an exciting product, one that we felt would be well-



received because of its strong science-fiction storyline, as well as its action/adventure aspects. This type of movie, with lots of special effects and



scenes on other worlds, appeals to the NES core audience.

"We are releasing this game overseas as well," Goldberg continued. "And because Arnold Schwarzenegger has worldwide appeal, we felt that this product would be a success in Europe and Japan as well."

As previously noted, Interplay Productions was commissioned to create the NES version of *Total Recall*, even though Interplay had no prior experience with an NES project. The question was put to Goldberg: Why would Acclaim turn to a *rookie* to develop such a critical project, particularly after having a high level of success with other development groups, such as England's Rare (*Wizards and Warriors*, *Iron Sword*, *NARC* and other prominent NES games, including some of Nintendo's own games) and Australia's Beam Software (*Big Foot*, *Air Wolf* and all NES conversions of Cinemaware games, such as *Defender of the Crown*). "We had tremendous confidence in Brian [Fargo], and felt that [Interplay] had an understanding of what we

wanted in the property. He's done other things in the past that have been well respected.

"It's a matter of supply and demand. As the number of games produced increases, we have greater need for programming

resources. And, in certain types of games, [using an American developer] can make for a cleaner translation of a product." Obviously the partnership worked out because Interplay is working on *Swords & Serpents*, a fantasy role-playing game for Acclaim due to be released this fall.

"It was good working with Acclaim," Fargo related. "We were initially concerned because [Interplay programs] only four or five computer games a year. But after reading the script—it was just a dynamite script—I felt we just couldn't pass it up."

From the start, *Total Recall* took Interplay about 2,000 hours of development and required two programmers, two artists, one sound and music technician and about six game testers. "And we listen to everybody," Fargo stated. "If a beta tester doesn't like a game section, we'll trash it and rework it."

"*Total Recall* was challenging," Fargo noted to us, "because the discipline used to make video games is different than the discipline making computer games. The age of the [video-game] audience is

younger, so you have to balance certain features. And things are more graphically rewarding in video games. For the most part, you don't want to see statistics—you want to see [the game] happen."

"In computer games you can throw lots of rules in," Fargo continued, "while on the NES you have to provide basics. If you want more depth and more intensity, you have to layer on extra strategies. By the end of the game, the player's an expert and has all the nuances of the play system down, but it has to come slowly."



Interplay's Total Recall team (from left to right): Michael Quarles, Bruce Schlickernd, Alan Pavlish, Eric Margolis, Brian Fargo, Scott Bieser, Todd Camasta

Judging by the time VG&CE spent talking to all the parties involved,



there's no doubt that Acclaim and Interplay are both excited about *Total Recall*. Playing through the game revealed the dedication to quality that both companies strive for. We'll leave the final decision up to you, but we think that *Total Recall* is a hit. ■



# DO NOT ATTEMPT YOUR MISSION UNTIL THE CHOPPERS ARE OVERHEAD, SNIPERS ARE IN POSITION, AND YOUR HOMEWORK'S DONE.

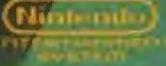
Not doing your homework could be a mistake. Every move you make could jeopardize your fellow rescuers, and those held captive.

*RESCUE: The Embassy Mission.* The action comes fast and furious. Itchy-fingered enemy gunmen. A perilous rappel down the sheer face of the Embassy. If you survive that, don't get cocky. You've still got to out-maneuver and out-think your opponents inside and mastermind the escape.

There are 15 levels of difficulty, from "Training Mission" to wickedly-fast "Jupiter Mission." Thrills are delivered in bold strokes, with super high quality graphics and animation.

With *RESCUE: The Embassy Mission*, brainpower is as important as firepower.

KEMCO • SEIKA



**RESCUE**  
THE EMBASSY MISSION

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# THE NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: DALLAS, TEXAS

by Howard H. Wen

**R**emember *The Wizard*? The film that premiered last year, starring Fred Savage of *The Wonder Years*? *The Wizard* had everything—great stars (besides Savage, there was Beau Bridges and Christian Slater), great lines like “Keep your Power Glove off my girl,” not to mention excellent product placement (Nintendo galore). In fact, had there been an Oscar category for “Best Product Placement in a Theatrical Film,” *The Wizard* would have won hands down.

The movie’s plot centered around Fred Savage’s character running off with his little brother to compete in a nationwide Nintendo competition. It turned out that his quiet sibling was not only an excellent Nintendo player but the best in the world. Of course, all this stuff about a Nintendo tournament was purely fictional.

Or was it? Earlier this year, Nintendo of America announced the Nintendo World Championships, a nationwide tour encompassing 30 major cities in the U.S. and Canada. At every stop, the best Nintendo players would compete in a specially developed triathlon game pak. Local area winners would then be sent to Orlando, Florida, to compete in the finals championship to be held and televised at Universal Studios (the company that financed and marketed *The Wizard*).

The premiere of the Nintendo World Championships (NWC) was held

in Dallas, Texas, March 8-11. Naturally, since this was the first city to play host for the tour, there was a lot of local area hoopla and publicity about it. And they were determined to make sure that nothing would go wrong.

A good time was had by all. Everybody came out happy—Nintendo, the kids and their parents. Well, *most* of their parents.

As the VG&CE writer who lives in the northern region of Dallas, it was my assignment to cover the event. My intention was to cover all four days of the event from several angles—to

The building covers the area of two football fields. This fact is pretty obvious—an inflatable Mario, looming three-stories tall, greets everything at the building’s entrance.

The first thing I see—well, run into—is the “Power Walk”: a conglomeration of NES game booths displaying some of the newest, yet-to-be-released titles, including *Rescue Rangers*, *Astyanax*, *Rocket Ranger* and *Super Spike V’Ball*. Recently released titles like *RoboCop*, *Batman* and *Baseball Simulator 1.00!* and sequels like *Double Dragon II*, *Bases Loaded II*, *Ninja Gaiden II*, *Castlevania III* and *Super Mario Bros. 3* are available for everybody to sample.

Overhead, huge blowup figures fill the sky. An inflatable Bat logo hangs over Sunsoft’s section of the Power Walk, where they’re appropriately showing off their newest NES title, *Batman*. Jaleco has a *Bases Loaded II* emblem; Data East suspends a blowup *RoboCop* doll who looks like he’s been hung at the gallows; Seika has Bugs Bunny; Tecmo proudly displays a ninja that resembles Donkey Kong; and then there’s Nintendo itself with Mario and Luigi. It was the invasion of the Nintendo inflatables.

As if these 130 NES game stations aren’t enough, there’s another section in the building with Game Boys to play. Located diagonally across from the Power Walk, these Game Boy displays are the same in retail stores—except there are 200 of them arranged in multiple aisles. Titles featured on the



provide a glimpse of what it was actually like to be there. Armed with copies of the latest issue of VG&CE, I wasn’t just ready to fulfill my assignment—I was prepared for Nintendo Armageddon.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 8

This gargantuan event requires the largest convention facility each host city can provide. Dallas’ Fair Park’s Automobile Building fits that order.

# "YOU STAND AT THE EDGE OF A DEEP CHASM. FROM THE DARKNESS BELOW RISE THE SCREAMS OF THE UNDEAD!"

Can you outwit and overcome the thoroughly-evil Warlock Lord? His mysterious spell holds Castle Shadowgate captive. Dozens of hidden pitfalls and nasty entities lurk in every corner.

Probe along menacing stone corridors looking for hidden passageways. Discover mysterious artifacts in dark chambers. Clues are there for those bold enough, and wise enough.

*Torches. Keys.  
Gemstones.*

Slay a dragon, cross a river of fire. But be careful. A wrong move could bring your quest to an untimely end.

A whole world of options are at your command with

dynamic graphics to bring the dark mysteries of the Middle Ages to life.

The question is...are you up to the challenge of Castle Shadowgate?

**KEMCO ▪ SEIKA**



# Shadowgate

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hand-held systems are *Batman*, *Double Dragon*, *Qix*, *Wheel of Fortune*, *Spider-Man* and lots of other games both brand-new and old.

At the other end of the Power Walk is the NWC Super Stage, where—according to the NWC guide book—the attractions include: "Nintendo Game Counselors with answers to the most asked game play questions, in addition to their favorite 'pro tips.'"

Right across from the Power Walk is a video stage where kids can make their own rap video. This attraction is sponsored by the Thomas J. Lipton company, who make Nintendo Real Fruit Snacks (chewy, bite-sized Marios, Koopas, Zeldas and Links in a variety of fruit flavors). The stage is made up to look like a scene from *Super Mario Bros.*, complete with plush Koopa Troops, Goombas and other colorful characters from the game. Participants move to the beat of a rap song, lip-syncing the lyrics.

All of this is lovingly captured on videotape by an operator who zooms in and out along with the repetitious beat. The end result looks bad and goofy, but the few brave kids who engage in this kind of production appear to be having a good time. Those definitely enjoying themselves are the people who have gathered to watch, gnawing on free samples of Real Fruit Snacks. As if to show us all how to do the Mario rap the "right" way, Mario himself (a short guy wearing a cephalically bloated costume) goes on stage to demonstrate.

Across from the Game Boy section is the VIP area. Most of the VIPs are men and women dressed in dark business suits, but a good number are kids, too, who are probably children or close associates of these adults. Overall, the scene looks more like a convention of bank executives.

At the end of the Automobile Building is the main attraction—the NWC Competition Arena. It's a stage with two huge monitor screens. Toward the front are six NES competition stations with monitors for both players and the audience. Between the

enormous screens is a "throne" for a seventh player to sit while playing. Behind this stage are 102 more game stations.

This is how the event basically works: After signing up, participants are lead to the NES stations backstage to play the NWC triathlon game pak. The seven high scorers are then taken on-stage; the one who scored the highest gets to sit in the throne. They then play the triathlon again—but this time there's an audience watching and an announcer blaring how game play is progressing.

Those who attain a certain score within their age category qualify for the semifinals competition to be held the following Sunday night. That's when the Wizards from each of the three age groups will be determined. These competitors also receive an NWC T-shirt, with the words "OFFICIAL SEMI-FINALIST" written in bold, black letters across the back.

At about a little after six o'clock—the actual opening time for the NWC—the general public starts milling in. It's at this time that the press corps starts going into a frenzy. Virtually all the local area newscasts arrive, lugging their video camera equipment and bringing model-like reporters.



Photographers run rampant, too, snapping photos of everything and anything, with telescoping cameras equipped with powerful flare-like flashes.

A reporter asks a kid for a brief interview. Not realizing what he's about to get himself into, the kid agrees. He's then promptly blinded by video camera lights and barraged with questions

## NWC DALLAS FINALISTS

Congratulations to the finalists of the first NWC in Dallas, Texas. For those soon to become finalists in other cities where NWC will stop, here are some of the competitors you'll be up against in Orlando, Florida (listed with age group and score):

Peter Carter—10 & under, 280,190

Jeff Baker—11 to 17, 596,200

Ray White—18 & older, 492,590



asked by the reporter, who aims the microphone right in his face. It's at that moment that the poor kid loses any ability he once had to articulate the English language properly.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 9

Today the NWC opened its doors at three in the afternoon—just in time to welcome kids getting off from school.

What was yesterday's VIP section has now been converted into the Parents' Oasis, a sanctuary for moms and dads who want a much-needed respite from the Nintendo gala. Now is the time for me to do some interviewing. I approach the competition stage and wait for the first group of competitors to come down.

A little boy, proudly wearing his brand-new, oversized "OFFICIAL SEMI-FINALIST" T-shirt, climbs down from the stage.

I lightly tug at his shirt. "I'm with VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT..." I flash a copy of the recent issue of VG&CE to him. "...Mind answering a few, brief questions?"

GAME BOY!



# JAPANESE MASTERPIECE



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## HEIANKYO ALIEN

This is the most talked about video game storm 10 years ago in Japan. The sound uses the latest in high technology called System HMMSS. With this new Heiankyo Game Boy™, you'll be able to enjoy 2

ultimate fun in New and exciting fun in Old. The added bonus of 2 games in 1 will make your playing more enjoyable. In addition, a new feature available only on Game Boy™ software is the 2 player, opponent mode. By connecting the 2 Game Boys, 2 players can now enjoy playing this highly sophisticated game. Heiankyo Alien Is a game everyone can enjoy.



1,000 years ago, an army of malicious Aliens invaded the peaceful city of Kyoto forcing the villagers into an endless battle with the unwelcomed visitors.

that took Japan by a quality of this game Multi Matrix Series Alien game made for different varieties of



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"Sure," he responds.

I give him the magazine to keep, "softening him up" for the interview.

He's 11-years-old. His score in the event was over 300,000 points. When I ask what he thinks about the NWC, his response is a subtle, "It's great."

In fact, most of my interview subjects describe the NWC as "great." The number-one bit of advice for the NWC triathlon was to "practice Tetris," although one man, a 39-year-old father, advised the younger crowd to "do your homework first."

The highest scores in the triathlon event seem to get higher and higher as the hours go by. First a score of a little over 400,000 points is the record holder. Then it's 500,000+ and 600,000+.

Competition on the stage is fast and furious. The announcer's frenetic voice calling out a running commentary of all the participant's plays, coupled with the constant switching of each of the player's game screens onto one of the two giant TV screens, makes the event nerve-racking. And that's just for those of us *watching* it. For the players themselves, it probably really is.

"Oh, I can't believe all the great players we have here! Whew!" overreacts the announcer. You'd think he was the one competing.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 10

While heading toward the Super Stage, sounds and lights come alive, and an announcer comes on stage. He introduces two game counselors from Nintendo's Seattle, Washington, headquarters. A pair of men come onto the stage wearing flashy "Nintendo Game Counselor" jackets.

"Well, I used to work at Safeway," one of the men answers as to how he got his job. "Then I came across this ad from Nintendo for people to be telephone game counselors." This is the Counselor's Corner segment of the show. "Does anyone in the audience have a game question for our counselors?" asks the announcer.

A boy raises his hand, and the man goes up to him with his microphone, à la Phil Donahue.

"On *Shadowgate*, how do you get past the guard dogs?" the little lad inquires.

One of the game counselors proceeds to answer, giving a thorough breakdown of the video-game dilemma. Inarguably, these guys really do know their stuff quite well.

It's all wrapped up by the Top 30 most popular Nintendo games countdown. Now the show becomes like an American Top 40. (The number-one NES game, by the way, turns out to be *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.)

A few minutes later I notice a guy near the Power Walk...it's Howard Phillips of Nintendo, star of the

"Howard and Nester" comic.

I then immediately take off after the Nintendo bow-tied spokesman, quickly putting together brief

questions to ask him. I introduce myself. He calmly agrees to answer my brief interview questions. He commented on how positive the response to the NWC has been so far, how much of a "family atmosphere" the event turned out to have and the surprising female participant turnout.

I then go into the question that personally interests me. How did he get this job?

"Well, I'd been working for Nintendo since '81, starting in the warehouse. When the company grew, I was in a position to give feedback on their projects. And I guess they liked what I did, so I grew along with them," he tells me.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 11

Today's the last day of the Dallas leg of the NWC tour, which means the semifinalists competition. Before this evening's over, the Dallas Nintendo Wizards from each of the three age categories will be determined.

The first thing you notice is that

## THE BIGGEST "EASTER EGG" OF ALL

Our Assistant Editor Donn Nauert conversed with Howard Phillips, senior editor of *Nintendo Power* magazine and spokesman for Nintendo of America, on the floor of the NWC. Mr. Phillips commented that he had made over 900,000 points at one time on the triathlon event.

How could he possibly have done that when the average scores in the competition averaged from about 300,000 to 400,000 points? Only one or two players had earned scores of about no more than 850,000. Could he have found an Easter egg?

To understand how this Easter egg works, a knowledge of the specifics of the NWC triathlon event—including how scores for the three games are accumulated—is necessary:

The special game pak for the NWC competition contains modified versions of *Super Mario Bros.*, *Rad Racer* and *Tetris*. The object of the contest is to complete certain requirements in these three games within a 6-minute time limit. Your overall score is totaled from how well you do in each event.

**Super Mario Bros.**—The object here is to collect 50 coins as quickly as possible. Using a watch, our Associate Editor estimated that it should take no more than a minute and 20 seconds to collect 50 coins. The higher scoring competitors were able to gather the 50 coins in just a little over a minute of play.

**Rad Racer**—After a 20-second delay of screens congratulating you on completing the *Super Mario Bros.* portion, it's off to *Rad Racer*. Maintaining a speed of over 200 km/hour is the advice given by Mr. Phillips. Completing this event as soon as possible, which sends your car into a "power slide," is essential because it takes well over 2 minutes to finish the race. Points scored in *Rad Racer* are multiplied by ten during the final tally.

**Tetris**—This is where all the big points are earned—your score on this game is multiplied by 25. Thus, the time you saved by completing *Super Mario Bros.* and *Rad Racer* can pay off quickly here. On average, though, players get about the same amount of time to play *Tetris* as they did in *Rad Racer*. Those familiar with this game know that at times *Tetris* can be more of a game of luck than skill. Because of the 25-fold increase in points, high scorers at the Dallas NWC were taking big chances—building up dangerously high structures in the hopes that a "stick" would fall soon, enabling them to complete a mega-point "tetris."

And now, how the Easter egg works:

**Super Mario Bros.**—Gather anywhere from 45 to 49 coins, but don't get 50, or you will automatically be sent to *Rad Racer*. Quickly play the game up to level 1-2, and

continued on page 58

continued on page 58



# The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

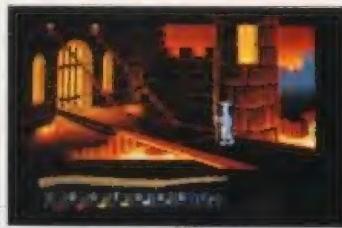
Alone on a craggy hilltop, high above an island shrouded in perpetual mist, your quest begins. But tread gingerly, because while the world of *Loom*™ is breathtakingly beautiful, unspeakable danger awaits the unsuspecting.

Trepidation soon gives way to bravado as you peek inside abandoned tents in the village. Stumbling over a discarded weaver's distaff, you watch in wonder as it gradually glows and resonates with a sequence of musical notes. Tentatively at first, you point the staff and repeat the notes. After con-

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**Typing is banished from this kingdom.**

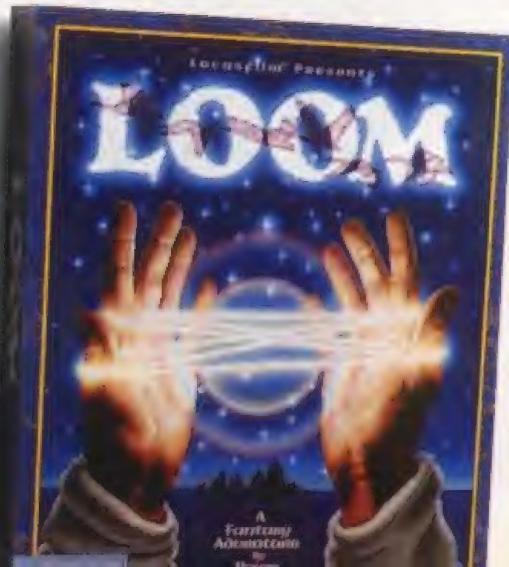
*Loom* is more than a masterpiece of fantasy storytelling. With *Loom*, Lucasfilm™ Games literally redefines the fantasy computer game experience. Simple point n' click actions move your character, select objects, and perform magic. No cumbersome keystrokes, text parsing, maze mapping, or inventory management intrude to break the spell.

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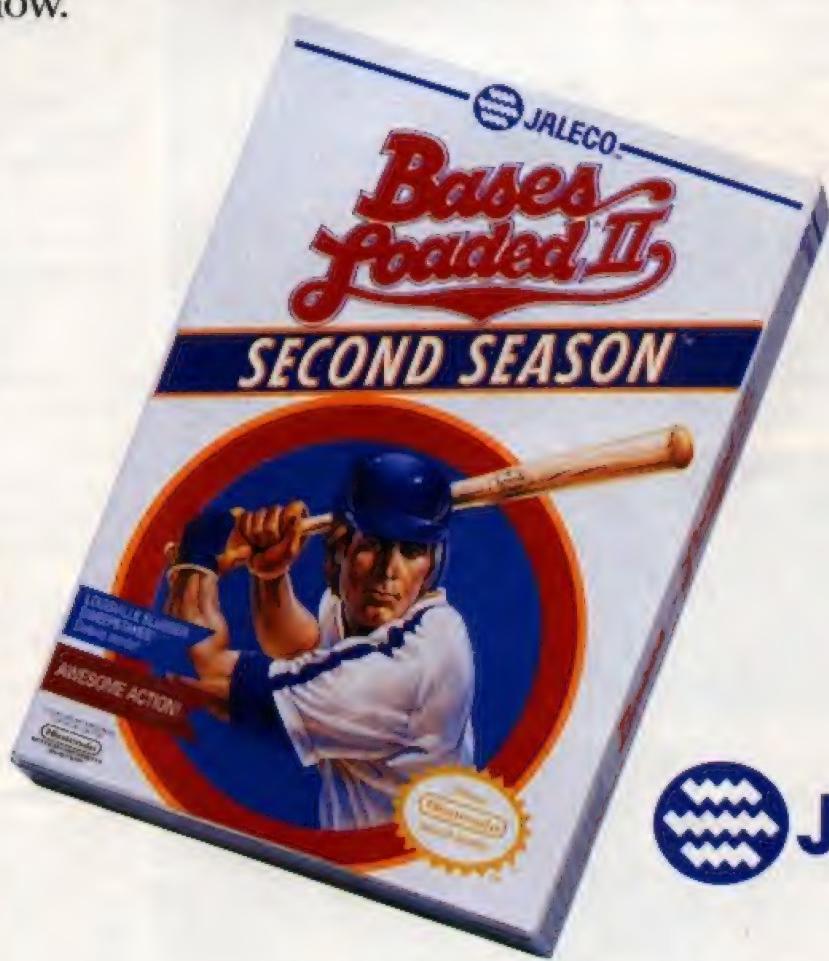


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# VIDEO

## GAME

### REVIEWS

#### Heroes of the Lance

**FCI**  
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

##### RATINGS:

Sound & Music	4
Graphics	5
Playability	4
Overall	4

Dungeons & Dragons, the sometimes controversial role-playing game of the early 1980s that defined role-playing games, is now available

for play on the NES. Well, sort of....

You see, *Heroes of the Lance* isn't exactly a video-game version of Dungeons & Dragons. It's part of the DragonLance series of games, which in turn are inspired by the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons games, and listed under that name. This rendition of *Heroes of the Lance*, for the Nintendo, is based on the original version for home computers. Got all of that? If you do and get the impression that *Heroes of the Lance* probably contains only watered-down elements from the Dungeons & Dragons games it's loosely based on, twice removed, then you're not completely wrong.

The generic game scenario revolves around eight adventurers who must traverse into the dungeons of Xak Tsaroth to recover the Disks of Mishakal. In other words, it's your typical romp-through-the-dungeon adventure where you have to slay innumerable human and beast enemies, such as dragons, trolls and gargoyles. Along the way, you find weapons, treasures and helpful clues, all the while gaining "experience points" for performing these deeds—which in pedestrian terms means your overall score.

The adventurers themselves are the varied assortment of characters from the Dark Ages you'd expect to find: the cleric, the swordsman, the archer, etc. And, like the cast to a '70s disaster film, the characters



Inspired by  
Dungeons &  
Dragons, FCI's  
*Heroes of the  
Lance* is a role-  
playing game  
for the NES.



have contrasting and complementary personalities, indicated by their strength, intuition, wisdom, condition, dexterity and charisma ratings. Some of the adventurers will be more willing to cooperate with other characters, giving up their weapons, if necessary, when you command them, but others won't be as complacent.

Spells are available for certain characters to cast, enabling them to shoot fireballs at enemies, capture them with a web or freeze them in place. Other spells include those that heal characters or revive ones that are recently deceased. Many times, though, these spells need to be used to perform such mundane tasks as blowing a monster out of your path. Direct face-to-face combat, you'll find, is not only tiring and time consuming, but uneventful and difficult to handle.

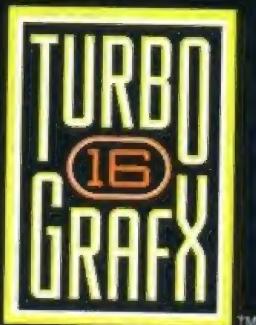
To say that the graphics are uninspired wouldn't be completely fair—there aren't too many graphics to begin with. The lower half of the game screen shows a directional compass and mug shots of the eight adventurers, with their life-energy lines alongside them. The remaining top portion of the screen is where all the game-playing takes place. Things seem pretty cramped up there in that "window." Colors are subdued in varying shades of gray and brown. The soundtrack is appropriately unobtrusive, but just as listless.

The main problem with *Heroes Of The Lance* is that it's an action-adventure game that tries to remain faithful to its namesake by implementing elements from the original source material. Unfortunately, the often needless spell casting and personality ratings come across looking like computerized sales charts and bog down what game play there is. Slowing things down even further

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are the sluggish combat sequences. Not even the especially helpful game-saving function helps matters much. To put it succinctly, *Heroes of the Lance* is a doomed expedition from the start.

—Howard H. Wen

FCI, Inc.  
150 East 52 Street  
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## Astyanax

JALECO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound & Music	7
Graphics	9
Playability	8
Overall	8

It seems that all action video games these days are "adventurized" contests. You know what I mean: games where you have to move your on-screen character through a confusing array of interconnected screens, searching for hidden clues, weapons, treasures or other such prizes. These are the game titles that you see "mapped out" every month in VG&CE, the games that take weeks—possibly months—to solve or figure out, because you get lost while playing them.

There's nothing wrong with video games like these; they're the staple of the industry. But not everyone has the time, patience or camera equipment to figure these games out. Hasn't there ever been a time when you just wanted to play a game where you didn't have to do so much . . . thinking? Where all you had to do was hack, slash, maim and mutilate the bad guys without needing to once ponder, "Gee, I wonder if I'm moving my character in the right direction?"

That's what you get with Jaleco's *Astyanax*—good arcade action and (most important) brainless fun. You play the part of Astyanax, a 16-year-old boy with a serious sleep disorder. He's been having dreams about a beautiful girl calling his name. Now, most people probably wouldn't consider this an unusual state of mind for an adolescent male, but Astyanax thinks so.

All of this is depicted in a "Japanimation"-style cartoon, upon powering-up your NES. "Cheesy" is an understated term when used to describe these animated sequences. But, in this case, the cheesiness adds to the overall video-gaming enjoyment. Believe me.



In these opening scenes, we also learn important stuff, like the fact that Astyanax's name is derived from a heroic character in Greek mythology and that he's a "normal" freshman at "Greenvale High." One morning while walking to school, he hears a female voice calling him. As he gazes upon the rising sun—POOF!—he's instantly sucked into another world, making him tardy for his first class.

Starting the game, you further learn that Astyanax was teleported from Earth to this other world by a fairy named "Cutie." Hovering in midair, she informs Astyanax that the girl in his dreams is actually a princess named "Rosebud," who's being held captive by the evil (and just as imaginatively named) Blackhorn.



**Jaleco's *Astyanax*, converted from their arcade game of the same name, provides loads of action.**

Further adding to the list of surprises, Cutie gives you the responsibility of saving Rosebud, defeating Blackhorn and his army of henchmen, freeing this other world from Blackhorn's evil power and getting back to Earth in time for school lunch.

On every level, Astyanax must defeat hordes of mythological Greek monsters, like Minotaurs, swashbuckling skeletons, one-



eyed floating blobs and things that look like airborne spores. And all the teen boy is armed with is a mythological meat cleaver called "Bash." Cutie, being the fairy that she is, is available to provide assistance—if you can find her, that is. She can change Bash (into an ax, sword or spear) or restore your superpower energy points.

Astyanax's powers include a spell that will momentarily freeze enemies in place, shoot fireballs in all directions or simply blow all adversaries off the screen with a lightning bolt. Naturally, summoning the powers of the gods uses up varying amounts of superpower points.

At the end of every level is an enemy who is more powerful than all previous ones. Defeating this hideous monster is necessary in order to advance Astyanax to the next level, where more of the same awaits, though at a faster pace.

Those seeking refuge from the deluge of "map-happy" video games will find it in *Astyanax*. Traditional arcade action is presented here, packaged with appropriate

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## Ninja Gaiden II

TECMO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound & Music 9

Graphics 9

Playability 8

Overall 9

From his vantage point high above the tallest mountains, the hulking warlord Ashtar watches the raging thunderstorm and broods.

So begins the sequel to one of the most popular games of 1989. Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden II*, subtitled "The Dark Sword of Chaos," continues the adventures of Ryu Hayabusa, ninja warrior. It's a martial-arts epic that demands to be taken seriously.

Like its predecessor, *Ninja Gaiden II* features a multitude of scrolling enemy-filled landscapes interspersed with movie-like intermissions that further the storyline. Because the game's challenges are broken up into "acts," these cinematic interludes seem more like Saturday-afternoon serial cliff-hangers than anything else. They also contribute heavily to the excitement of completing each level; you can hardly wait to find out what happens next!

The game play remains nearly unchanged. Ryu runs, jumps, slashes and makes use of a number of optional weapons. One minor change with major implications concerns Ryu's ability to jump up and cling to the wall: Instead of sticking there like a mosquito on flypaper, he can now climb up or down any surface he hangs on to. There are also new weapons to experiment with, including a "Red Ghost" image that follows you around, duplicating your moves a split-second after you make them.

Many of the areas Ryu passes through are challenging enough without their inhabitants. You'll walk over the length of a speeding freight train, stumble through a dark forest with only brief flashes of lightning for illumination, and fight against powerful winds in the midst of a brutal snowstorm.

It's hard to find fault with *Ninja Gaiden II*. The most popular complaint seems to be



**Master ninja Ryu Hayabusa returns for more martial arts conflict in Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden II*.**

that the game is too difficult. It's not easy for beginners, true, but most NES owners will have no problem, especially if you've had some experience with the original *Ninja Gaiden*. The programmers have spared no



expense in creating a sense of realistic challenge, in a world of fantasy that gets more involving each time you play. Simplifying the action in order to attract less-skilled players would only have cheapened the game's lush atmosphere.

It's interesting to note a subtle change in Ryu's personality between the action scenes and the intermissions. While battling his way through an endless army of bad guys and strange creatures, he maintains the image of a true ninja assassin: dark, silent and efficient. But during the "cinema display" sequences, his mask can't always hide his bug-eyed expressions of surprise, as he constantly exclaims, "What the . . . ?" That's okay, though; it makes it easier to identify with him.

In the end, it's the "cinema display" that keeps me coming back for more. The first intermission will look familiar to *Ninja Gaiden* devotees: A mysterious stranger pulls a gun on Ryu, but this time, it's for a different reason. When Ryu stands over the fallen body of Baron Spider and hears the name of Ashtar for the first time, it's enough to send chills up your spine. The music is also responsible for setting the mood of these scenes, and does so to great effect.

Titles like *Ninja Gaiden* are proof that video games are learning how to evoke players' emotions and entertain just like a movie or TV show can. These adventures go beyond the confines of video-game gimmickry; in fact, I wouldn't hesitate to call it a legitimate art form. That may be a lofty position for game designers to aspire to, particularly since the average NES owner is not yet in high school—but quality doesn't hurt, and Tecmo knows it.

*Ninja Gaiden II* is a winner, and it's got my vote as one of the best NES carts ever. Highly recommended.

—Chris Bieniek



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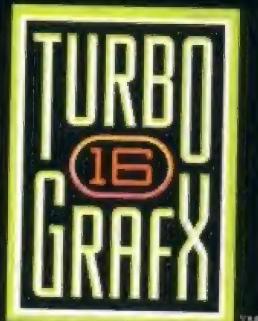
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## Starship Hector

HUDSON SOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$42.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound & Music	5
Graphics	5
Playability	6
Overall	5

Starship Hector, by Hudson Soft, is one of those games that was held up by the supposed chip shortage. It has taken this game quite a while to become available to the public. Although it is now somewhat aged—it has a copyright of 1987 on it—Starship Hector still has appeal.

So, are you ready for yet another scrolling shoot-'em-up?

Hector consists of six rounds of alternating vertical and horizontal scrolling through your standard alien landscape full of baddies just itching to blow your ship out from under you. Sound familiar? While this game doesn't exactly break new ground, it's another decent game based on a familiar and successful theme.

A new twist that I hadn't seen before involved the game selection. When starting a new game, the player may choose between either a normal game, a two-minute game or a five-minute game. With the latter two, once the time runs out, you're done. The goal of these two would be to maximize your score within that period of time. High scores are kept for each of the three game types, at least until you power down your NES.

As the game begins you have to take your ship through varied scenery, blasting away at alien ships in the air and along the ground, making sure that your shield is maintained. While the scenery changes from round to round, your enemies remain the same, for the most part, with a few new ones showing up here and there. There is also a different type of challenge at the end of each round, with either an enemy base or monster of some type trying to slow you down. While the methods for disposing of each differ, once the enemy is discovered, it presents a much less difficult challenge.

Your ship is well armed, and you have at your disposal two weapons. Standard laser-type shots may be fired in bursts of four to



destroy air targets, while bombs can be launched in sets of four to take care of your ground targets. (When scrolling horizontally, the bombs just take care of anything that gets in the way.) Autofire is also almost a necessity unless you have been gifted with hyperactive fingers!

The enemy ships are fast and deadly, but they move in exactly the same pattern, game after game, which gives the player a definite advantage over time. Two other factors tend to balance this out, however. First off, when you die, you're forced to start the round completely over, no matter how close you are to finishing it. Secondly, there aren't any continues, so when you lose that last man, it's all over. With extra men being awarded at 200,000, 500,000 and 1,000,000, your initial three men are valuable.

In the early rounds, your shield can handle several hits before collapsing. As the game progresses, your shield often can take only a couple of hits before you're destroyed. Hidden spots in the vertically scrolling rounds provide a ground-clearing explosion when exposed and are, for the most part, essential once the action picks up.

Starship Hector provides the action and challenge desired in this type of game, but offers little originality. There is scant change in the music or effects throughout the game, and the graphics aren't particularly eye-grabbing. The game does play fairly well, however, which is generally the most important aspect in games of this sort.

—Brent Walker

Hudson Soft  
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South San Francisco, CA 94080  
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## Super C

KONAMI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$43.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound & Music	6
Graphics	6
Playability	7
Overall	6

If you thought that the diabolical Red Falcon was sent to his final resting place for good, think again. He's back, badder than before, with a new group of cronies to terrorize Earth—Krypto-Crustacean, the Babalu Destructoid Mechanism and the Jagger Froid's Spit Soldier, just to name a few. Once again Mad Dog and Scorpion have the enviable task of wiping out Red Falcon and saving all mankind. (As if once wasn't enough!)

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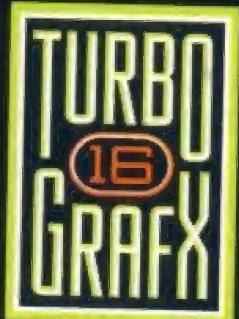


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Legendary Axe II	Magical Dinosaur Tour

Konami's *Super C* is the sequel to the original *Contra*, which is obvious from the start. Either one or two players fight their way through eight levels, blasting anything that moves. Each player starts with three men and may continue three times before starting over. Special power-ups include machine-gun shots, spread-gun shots, laser fire and a flame thrower. The machine gun is useful for those without an autofire controller, while the laser is just the opposite—it's fairly useless with autofire engaged. The spread gun and flame thrower both provide a withering wall of firepower that comes in handy, especially when the end of the round approaches. A rapid-fire power-up increases the speed of any weapon, a barrier power-up renders the player invincible for a short time and a mega-shell power-up gives the standard "smart bomb" result of destroying everything on the screen.

The majority of rounds consist of horizontal scrolling, though areas of vertical scrolling, as well as overhead views, provide some variety. Various military complexes, steamy jungles, mountains and radioactive lava fields are a few of the environments that must be traversed. Patches of water in the jungle areas slow you down, though ducking underwater provides easy protection from hostile shots. Watch for areas of ground falling away as well, as a wrong step can send you to the depths! The rounds each have the standard boss bad guy at the end that must be defeated before advancing to the next round.

The graphics are adequate, though some of the rounds seem dominated by one color (or shades of that color). As in the original, the last round has the nicest graphics, which helps make the struggle to reach it worth the effort. The sounds and music seem to be taken for the most part from *Contra*, with the background music being somewhat different. There are 15 to 20 sounds varying from simple shooting sounds to the theme for each round.

The players are easy to control, and the strategy required to advance through the rounds is fairly straightforward. The



**Konami's *Contra* is still one of the most popular NES games, and that torch will likely be handed down to its follow-up, *Super C*.**



longevity of this game may be questionable, though, as it isn't difficult to advance through the first four rounds once certain areas and methods of dealing with the end bosses are memorized. I didn't feel that the game became particularly challenging until the later rounds. The action is continuous, however, and keeps you on your toes, at least until an area becomes familiar. Any player should be able to advance through the game with patience; there are areas where a player can sit and hunt to rack up points and amass extra men. A maximum of four extra men will be displayed on-screen at a time, though the others are kept track of internally.

Players who enjoyed *Contra* should find *Super C* acceptable, as long as major differences or innovations in the content of the game aren't expected. *Super C* provides the same kind of action as its predecessor, and anyone with a good joystick and decent reflexes should have no problem repulsing the Red Falcon's second attempt at dominating Earth.

—B.W.

Konami  
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Buffalo Grove, IL 60089  
(312) 215-5111

## Pat Riley's Slammin' Jammin' Basketball

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

RATINGS:
Sound & Music 9
Graphics 10
Playability 7
Overall 8

One of the best ways to evaluate an original game is to compare it to existing arcade coin-ops.

Recently, I had the opportunity to view *Magic Johnson's Fast Break Basketball* and play the Amiga megagame based on the coin-op. I was then in the ideal position of being able to handle the evaluation of the prerelease version of Sega's *Pat Riley's Slammin' Jammin' Basketball*. Fortunately, the mechanics for both games are similar, because the cart came with only a single typewritten page of instructions.

Without a doubt, *Pat Riley's Slammin' Jammin' Basketball*, even in its prerelease form, is a masterpiece. The game features two full teams of five players each, on-screen simultaneously. This is something that no other basketball game I have seen has been able to accomplish. To keep such a complex game running up to speed generally allows only a two-on-two contest, at the most. Genesis handles all ten players seamlessly—and with style. The animations are superb, and a catchy musical tune plays con-

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tinuously in the background. The roar of the crowd for a successful slam dunk and the excellent sound effects representing the ball being dribbled, bouncing off the rim or cleanly swishing through the net all lend an air of realism to this Genesis title.

The single most-impressive feature is the monster slam dunks. The screen instantaneously switches from a distant side view of the court to a close-up of the hoop, the offensive player and a defensive player (if one is in the vicinity). These objects fill almost the entire screen, and yet, only minute screen flicker can be seen.

Since overscan is implemented, meaning that the play area extends to the very edge of the TV/monitor, most of the court can be seen at one time. For the other areas, a fluid horizontal scroll moves the entire court.

The play mechanics may seem complicated initially but can be mastered easily. The learning curve is not in the least frustrating, and the computer doesn't play flawlessly against a human opponent. There are three levels of play: exhibition or tournament modes and ability to switch the player lineup around during time-outs. (Yes, Virginia, there are time-outs.)

Several functions in the preliminary version we saw have either not yet been implemented or are merely undocumented. These include the ability to steal the ball from a dribbling player, as well as a two-player tournament mode. Similarly, I do hope Sega will correct the size of the basketball—it looks more like a beach ball! In the two-player mode, fouls cannot be initiated, even by the most desperate player. Although there is a method for stopping a slam dunk, there is none for blocking a jump shot. Finally, there should be a toggle for the music, without disturbing the sound effects. If these areas are addressed before the final release, *Pat Riley's Slammin' Jammin' Basketball* will stand alone in the marketplace, threatening the supremacy of the arcades!

—Frank Eva



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## Neutopia

NEC HOME ELECTRONICS

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$54.00)

### RATINGS:

Sound & Music	7
Graphics	8
Playability	9
Overall	8

Long ago, in a place called Neutopia, the people of the land worshiped at a sacred shrine containing eight holy medallions. But the evil Dirth, liking peace about as much as he liked having boils on his bum, captured the beautiful princess Raran and the eight medallions, leaving Neutopia in an uproar. Now it's up to the hero, Jazeta, to successfully rescue the princess and return the eight holy medallions to the shrine.

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. In many ways, that's probably true. At least, no one wants to imitate



someone or something that isn't already successful. One has to wonder, however, how Nintendo is going to feel when they get a look at NEC's latest adventure game, *Neutopia*, a virtual clone of Nintendo's own *The Legend of Zelda*.

In all fairness, *Neutopia* is not exactly *Zelda*, but rather *Zelda* rearranged. Still, the number of similarities between the games leaves no doubt what the authors had in mind when they started programming.

Everything is here: the overworld (although it's not called the overworld), which you explore looking for special items and battling monsters; secret entrances, which you find by blasting walls with bombs, by shoving stones or by burning trees; and secret rooms, in which you get clues to the game's solution as well as buy important items such as bombs and medicine. Yep. This is *Zelda* all right. (Not that I'm complaining.)

Here also are the underground labyrinths, in which you move from room to room in search of special items. The goal of each underground labyrinth is to

find and defeat the boss enemy in order to obtain one of the eight medallions (*Neutopia*'s version of *Zelda*'s Triforce).

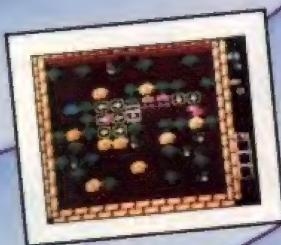
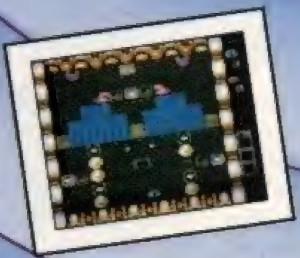
While in the labyrinth a compass helps you navigate, and a crystal globe provides a map of most of

# Lolo 2



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the rooms in the labyrinth. These items parallel *Zelda's* compass and map, respectively. Other special items include the magic stick, which allows you to shoot balls of fire; the Shoes of the Falcon, which increase your running speed; luminous moss, which provides light; the magic ring, which transforms monsters into weaker adversaries; and keys, which provide access to a boss enemy's room.

Anyone who has played *The Legend of Zelda* will feel more than déjà vu when they get into *Neutopia*. Still, it's a wonderful game, which, though not exactly original (and what is these days?), sports sensational graphics and pleasing sound effects—very much a '90s version of *The Legend of Zelda*, the most popular NES game of all time.

If the TurboGrafx-16 is your first game machine, don't miss *Neutopia*. If you've already played *The Legend of Zelda*, you may want to consider whether you want more of the same. Chances are that you do.

—Clayton Walnum

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**NEC's *Neutopia*, for the TurboGrafx-16, is a not-to-be-missed adventure in the vein of the *Zelda* series.**



C the crud. This ranking system allows players to compete fairly against lesser skilled opponents.

In a tournament, which may be up to three games, the human player chooses his league and team. The computer selects the opponents. Unfortunately, *Slap Shot* doesn't provide a two-player tournament option.

Once the puck is dropped, game control varies depending on whether you're playing offense or defense. In the offensive mode, the player with the puck is identified by an arrow. You control the player's movement with the arrow pad, while Button 2 passes the puck and Button 1 shoots for a goal.

In the defensive mode, the player you control is also identified with an arrow and maneuvered with the arrow pad. Now, however, Button 2 allows you to switch the arrow, and thus switch control, from one player to another. Once the goaltender appears on the screen, the arrow pad controls him as he attempts to block the opponent's shots.

If one of your team members gets a little too aggressive, you may find yourself in a slugfest. When fighting, punch as fast as you can. It's not the instigator that gets banished to the penalty box, but rather the player who lands the least punches.

Generally, *Slap Shot* offers little innovation to differentiate it from other video-game hockey simulations. The graphics and sound are acceptable, though nothing special. A glitch in the game occasionally leaves small blocks of graphic garbage on the screen. Although the blocks don't interfere with game play, one has to wonder why the problem wasn't corrected.

When the action picks up, it becomes extremely difficult to keep track of the puck. Worse, if you don't choose the teams care-



**Slap Shot, by Sega for the Master System, is a fast and furious hockey simulator featuring high-speed tournament play.**

For the Sega Master System (\$29.95)

#### RATINGS:

Sound & Music 5

Graphics 6

Playability 6

Overall 6

*Slap Shot*, a new sports simulation from Sega, gives you a chance to take to the ice and win the hockey championships. Whether you choose to lace 'em up in a tournament against the computer or face off with a human or computer opponent in an exhibition game, the action is fast and furious. So furious, in fact, that you may end up cooling your heels in the penalty box for roughing up an opponent.

In an exhibition game, you pick from three leagues, each ranked A, B, or C according to difficulty. Once you've chosen a league, you can compare the relative strengths of the teams within the league. Each team is tiered for power, speed and balance, with A being the cream of the crop and



fully, you'll end up with two teams whose uniforms are so close in color it's almost impossible to tell them apart.

The verdict? If you already have a hockey simulation in your collection, I doubt you'll find anything different here. But if your hockey quota has yet to be filled, *Slap Shot* won't leave you skating on thin ice.

—C. W.

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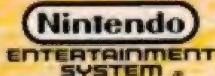


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# **Ghostbusters**

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

## RATINGS:

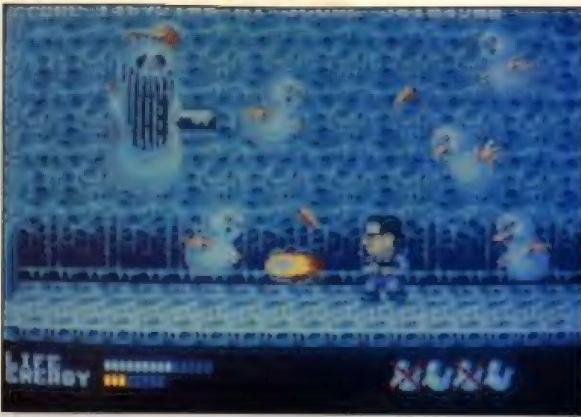
Sound & Music	8
Graphics	8
Playability	9
Overall	8

For Genesis owners, the scuttlebutt doesn't get any better than this. Yes, Sega is releasing *Ghostbusters* for the Genesis. No, it's not the familiar (and lackluster) *Ghostbusters* game already available for the NES, the SMS, the Atari 7800/2600 and a half dozen other game and computer systems. Nor is it based on Activision's *Ghostbusters II*. This is a totally new game, and happily, it's a real winner. The graphics are delightful, the plentiful music is truly arcade quality and the game play is addictive and complex.

You kick off by selecting a difficulty level from the option screen (easy, normal or hard). From that point you choose which of the characters you want to play: Peter, Raymond or Egon. The faces are marvelous caricatures of the actors who played the respective roles: Egon is the spitting image of Harold Ramis, Raymond is Dan Ackroyd, and Peter is Bill Murray. Depending on the situation, the personalities take on some hilarious animated expressions.

You then decide which of four locations to investigate: a small home, an apartment building, a mansion or a skyscraper. Each location is progressively larger and more difficult, but the fee for ridding the location of its unwanted spirits is steeper for more difficult missions. Clean up all four locations, and you'll proceed to the fifth, most daunting mission: the haunted castle, the source of all the ghosts and demons.

Before you enter each location, you can visit either of two shops: a weapons shop or an item shop. Particular weapons (with unlimited ammo) are required for dealing with certain ghosts, particularly the "boss" ghosts found in tough-



**Among the many movie licenses that Sega is developing for the 16-bit Genesis, *Ghostbusters* is the first to appear on the scene.**

to-reach rooms. These armaments help you survive by allowing you to see otherwise invisible ghosts or providing nourishment so that your life meter doesn't run out (three lives per game; you can continue, but you lose some of your money). The weapons are expensive, requiring more than you can make from your fees, but each building also has a number of safes scattered around. If, during your work, you happen to blow up a safe and sock away its contents, well, that's your prerogative. Some of the safes are booby-trapped, requiring you to run a short distance before the trap detonates.

Tracking your progress through each building is accomplished with the aid of the **START** button, which pauses your game and progresses to a supplemental screen. With this screen, you can easily assess the building's size, the room schematics and which rooms you've already visited. You can also utilize different weapons and items from your stock on this sub screen.

The ghosts come in dozens of shapes and sizes. Because this is a game about haunted houses, you'll find that simple objects often have lives of their own. The silverware takes kamikaze dives at you, the tablecloths attempt to engulf you, the chandeliers try to crush you. And there are plenty of garden-variety slimers and spirits, as well as beautifully animated bosses such as the enormous Sta-Puft Marshmallow Man, who flinches comically with each hit.

This is the best run-jump-shoot game available yet for Genesis, plus it also has a terrific sense of humor. The music is atmospheric, with authentic *Ghostbusters* melodies interwoven with creepy organs and violins. The graphic detail is superb (check out the melting and falling ice sequence). Furthermore, while the strategies are not terribly difficult, the variety of scenes and situations will have you playing certain sequences over and over for plain enjoyment. This game is tremendous fun, not only to play, but to watch.

—Joshua Mandel

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there are an awful lot of semifinalists. The kids in the 10-&-under age group, most of them wearing their "OFFICIAL SEMI-FINALIST" shirts, stand in two lines that stretch from the competition arena all the way to the other end of the building, where the Super Stage is located. Surprisingly, within the next half hour all the semifinalists in both lines are processed. Efficiency has played a big part in the NWC organization during these past four days.

Another half hour later, Howard Phillips goes on stage. After that, the seven top-scoring semifinalists come on stage, where Phillips gets their names and asks if they have any triathlon game hints and tips to offer.

"Practice *Tetris*," "Go fast on *Rad Racer*," and "Get 50 coins on *Super Mario Bros.*, fast," summarizes their words of wisdom.

The announcer takes over, and once the semifinalists take their places at their game stations, the competition starts. These few minutes are *tense*, since the kids playing are all very good. The audience crowds toward the stage, anxiously watching. They cheer when the first players complete the first part of the triathlon, *Super Mario Bros.*, reacting the same way when they finish the *Rad Racer* portion.

The most excruciating moment comes when all the competitors are playing *Tetris*. This is when luck comes into play—the factor that will determine who the top two will be. The scores for all the players are very close to one another.

Once the time limit on the triathlon game paks simultaneously goes up, NWC roadies in blue jumpsuits carefully record the final scores and determine the top two placers. The two boys who place are cheered on by their families, friends and people in the audience, and the announcer has now become slightly hysterical. Those who didn't place are given autographed copies of *Super Mario Bros. 3* and

commended by Howard Phillips for playing well.

After a 3-minute rest period, the last two semifinalists begin the one-on-one tournament. The audience watches intently as camcorders and news cameras record the showdown. The announcer yells out "Whew!" several times while giving his play-by-play.

In the end, the winner, Peter Carter, is seen on one of the two giant screens—with a score of 280,190, much lower than previous points earned (the overall record was over 840,000). The audience cheers. His photo is taken with Howard Phillips, who presents him a golden trophy. A representative from U.S. VideoTel (a local area telecommunications service) gives him

a check the size of a flying carpet for \$3333.33. His parents get a car, and what's more, he gets to skip school and go to Orlando, Florida, to compete in the finals competition this fall. When

asked how he feels, Peter says he couldn't sleep last night because he was too excited, and it looks like he won't be getting much sleep tonight either.

After the celebration ends, the audience reduces in size somewhat for the upcoming semifinalist competition for the 11-17 age category. Like their predecessors, these young men are submitted to a similar questioning procedure by Phillips.

Howard Phillips wishes the last seven top-scoring semifinalists of the 11-17 age group good luck—I wonder if they'll need it—and the announcer returns to the microphone.

"Get your hands on your controllers, and assume a comfortable position," he advises the young men. Except for the high-scorer, who gets the throne, there are no chairs provided for the other six competitors to sit on while they play. And so the final contestants crouch down for their supreme battle.

"Let's play some *Nin-tendo!*" proclaims the announcer, and the competition begins. ■

warp to 3-1. From there, perform that well-known trick where you can block a Koopa Troop, enabling Mario to continuously jump on its shell. This will drastically inflate your score. The key to this Easter egg is once you receive 8,000 points for a jump, you need to get off the Koopa Troop without him sliding past you. This will reset the count so you can continue to rack up points. Remember, you don't receive points for 1-Ups.

Continue doing this even when your fellow competitors are well into playing *Rad Racer*. When you see one of them going into their "power slide," have Mario gather the last couple of coins you need and advance to *Rad Racer*.

**Rad Racer**—The "legal" details above for *Rad Racer* apply for this Easter egg as well. But when you're racing your car to the finish, the other competitors should now be building their rows of blocks on *Tetris*.

**Tetris**—As soon as you arrive at this event, there will be less than 30 seconds left on the competition clock. Go ahead and lay down your blocks; there's no need to hurry to complete any lines.

Once the timer goes up, your tabulated score should be over 500,000 points—maybe higher, depending on how often you scored while hopping on the Koopa. However, a skilled player who competes adhering to the "legal" technique should earn 300,000 to 400,000 points. What happened here? Even though the triathlon game pak multiplies your score on *Tetris* by 25, the rate at which you could earn points by performing the above-mentioned tricks in *Super Mario Bros.* can increase your overall score enormously.

Is this considered cheating in the NWC competition? That's difficult to answer because there was no official rule sheet provided!

At one time on stage, Mr. Phillips did state to competitors that they had to play all three events in order for their scores to be legitimate. Yet, what does "playing" technically mean? Couldn't setting down just one block during the last five seconds of *Tetris* be considered "playing all three events"? Without a doubt, the NWC's lack of a detailed set of written competition rules has opened up numerous ambiguities that could lead to contested rule judgements.

What can be done to prevent abuse? The answer is simple. The triathlon was probably tested under the natural assumption that competitors would play it the "right" way. The game testers concentrated on making sure the contest was "competitive," forgetting to look into the possibility of alternative—and "less competitive"—ways of earning points. It was later stated that simply finishing a lap of *Rad Racer* would qualify you.

—H.H.W.



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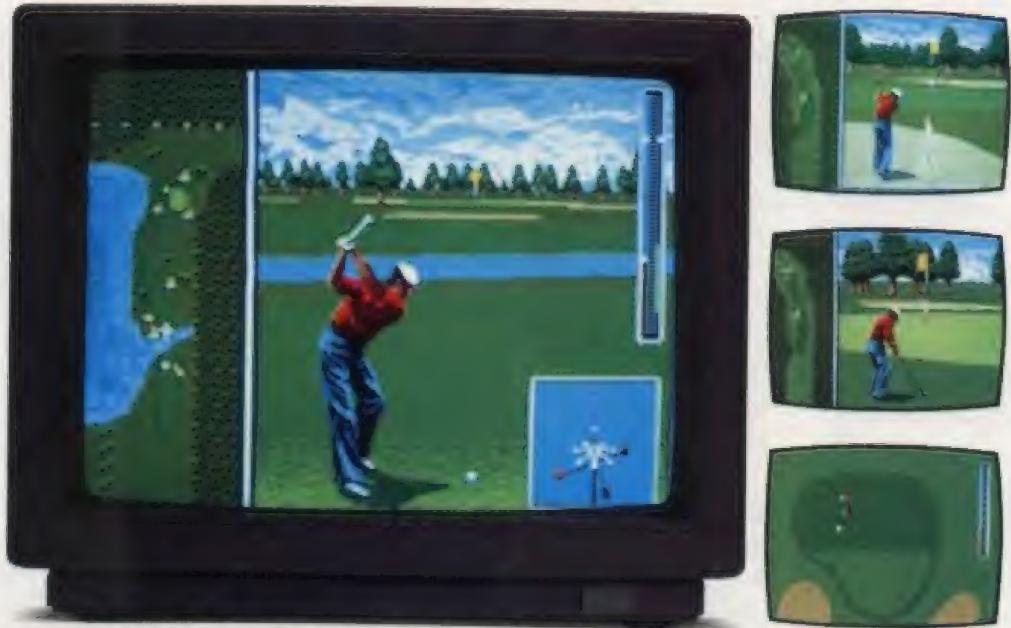
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**A**s children, many of us often waited anxiously to watch the *Batman* television show, a '60s version of the longtime comic book. However, true veteran aficionados felt violated by the almost slapstick characterizations of the small-screen interpretation.

As an overdue tribute to Bob Kane's original Caped Crusader, who was quite a bit more vicious in his dealings with criminals than TV's *Batman*, announcements were made regarding the creation of a *Batman* movie. Most old-time fans rejoiced at the release of Warner Bros.' 1989 *Batman*, starring Michael Keaton in the title role and Jack Nicholson as the dastardly Joker.

Now Sunsoft has brought us a Nintendo Entertainment System rendition of *Batman*, based on the recent movie, and the version passes with flying colors. (See the March 1990 issue of VG&CE for more details.) And to help you out of the tough jams you may have found yourself in, we present you with a two-part guide to Sunsoft's *Batman*, because there are many spots where you may find Gotham City's winged warrior hung up.

First, a disclaimer: While this strategy guide may be of substantial help to a player in need, looking at too many of these hints may ruin some of the game's many surprises. Please use this guide with discretion.



# THE BATMAN STRATEGY GUIDE

PART I

by Andy Eddy, Donn Nauert and Bissy Eddy

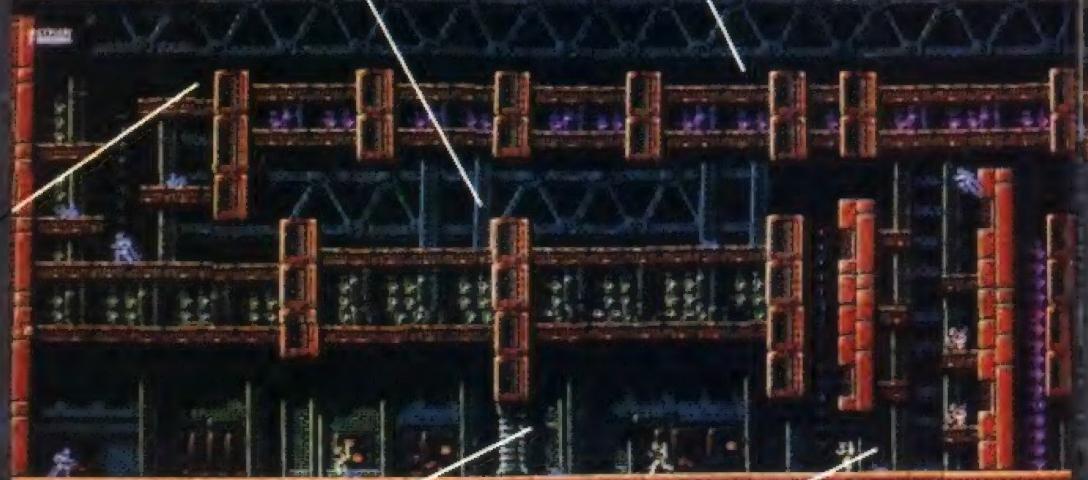
## STAGE 1-1



This easy level is a good place to acquire some weapons for later. If you go forward rather than backtrack, you'll get any of the same characters—and a chance for more icons.

This is a good place to practice Batman's wall-clinging ability.

## STAGE 1-2



After you defeat the last Mobile Tracker, you'll meet the Enforcer, a hovering annoyance that is easily dispatched. Crouch behind the pillar, load up with the Dirk and, right before he fires, shoot him from your squat position.

Get ready, because you'll meet another Enforcer here.

This is the first appearance of the Mobile Home Tracker. (No, it isn't a way to find cheap housing.) When you get close enough, this mechanism will roll toward you and explode. Simply jump over it (if you have headroom), or leap backward to avoid it.

When you get here, you have the choice of facing the Heatwaves or climbing this corridor. To get through this section, you'll need to have mastered Batman's clinging abilities. Otherwise you'll drop down and likely face a slew of baddies when you hit the floor.

## GENERAL HINTS

There are some tidbits of basic advice that we can give you. Here are a few:

- Start punching before you reach the enemy you are trying to slay. Your fist will make contact a short distance before it appears it should.
- Learn to conserve your weapons. Whenever possible, use the least power-depleting weapon—preferably Batman's punching power—to finish off a foe.
- There are many places in the game that Batman can recharge his weapons and power bar. If you defeat an enemy, back up a short distance, then return to your previous position. You can

often defeat the same character, thus bringing out additional icons for acquisition. We'll alert you to some of these areas in the maps.

- It's imperative that you learn the essential art of wall-clinging. There are certain sections that absolutely require this technique.
- Some long leaps require you to drop off the edge of a platform, grab on to the side of the platform as you fall past then jump off and over the chasm you're trying to clear. This "drop, grab and jump" maneuver is sometimes the only way to get past an obstacle. We'll tell you the best places to use this maneuver.

TM & © 1984 DC Comics Inc.  
TM & © 1989 DC Comics Inc.

Before you drop here, load up with your spear gun.



When you hit bottom, you'll notice a guard leaning on the wall. Make sure you have headroom to jump up, because he'll be rushing you in a second. When he stops his charge at the right, plug him with your spear gun. (It'll take a few shots to finish him off.)

## STAGE 1-3



This room is the home of the Killer Moth. To put the Moth on mothballs, stand your ground (you'll be safe there), wait until he makes his charge and hit him. (Any weapon will work, but the punch won't diminish your weapon count.)

## STAGE 2-1

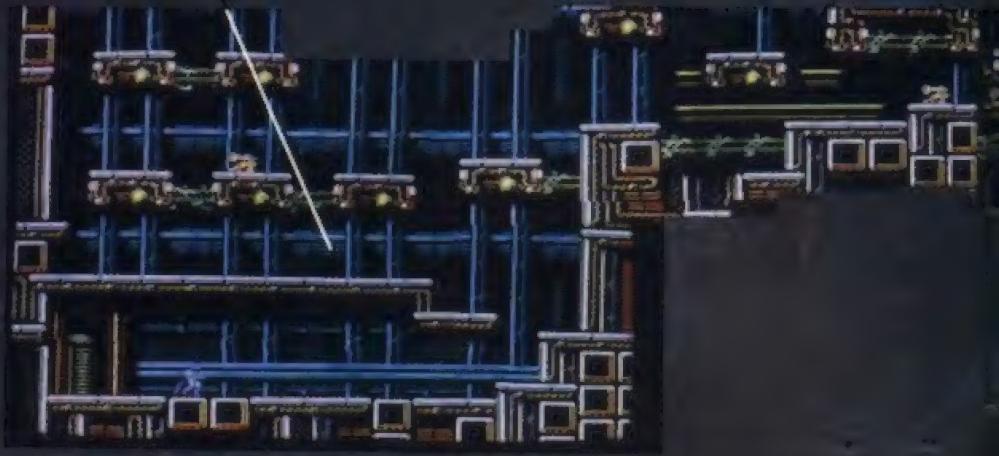


When you get here, you'll face the added danger of "gluk," the chemical residue in this area that drips down from above. And, no, a Bat hat won't help you.



## STAGE 2-2

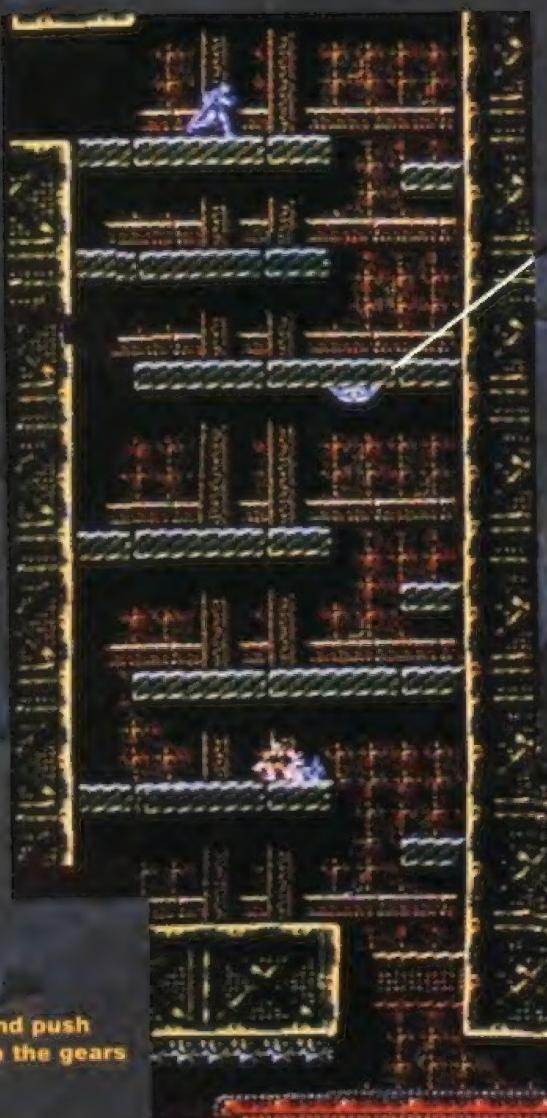
From here on in, you'll have to restrain your jumps. Otherwise you'll risk banging your head on the electrical circuitry.



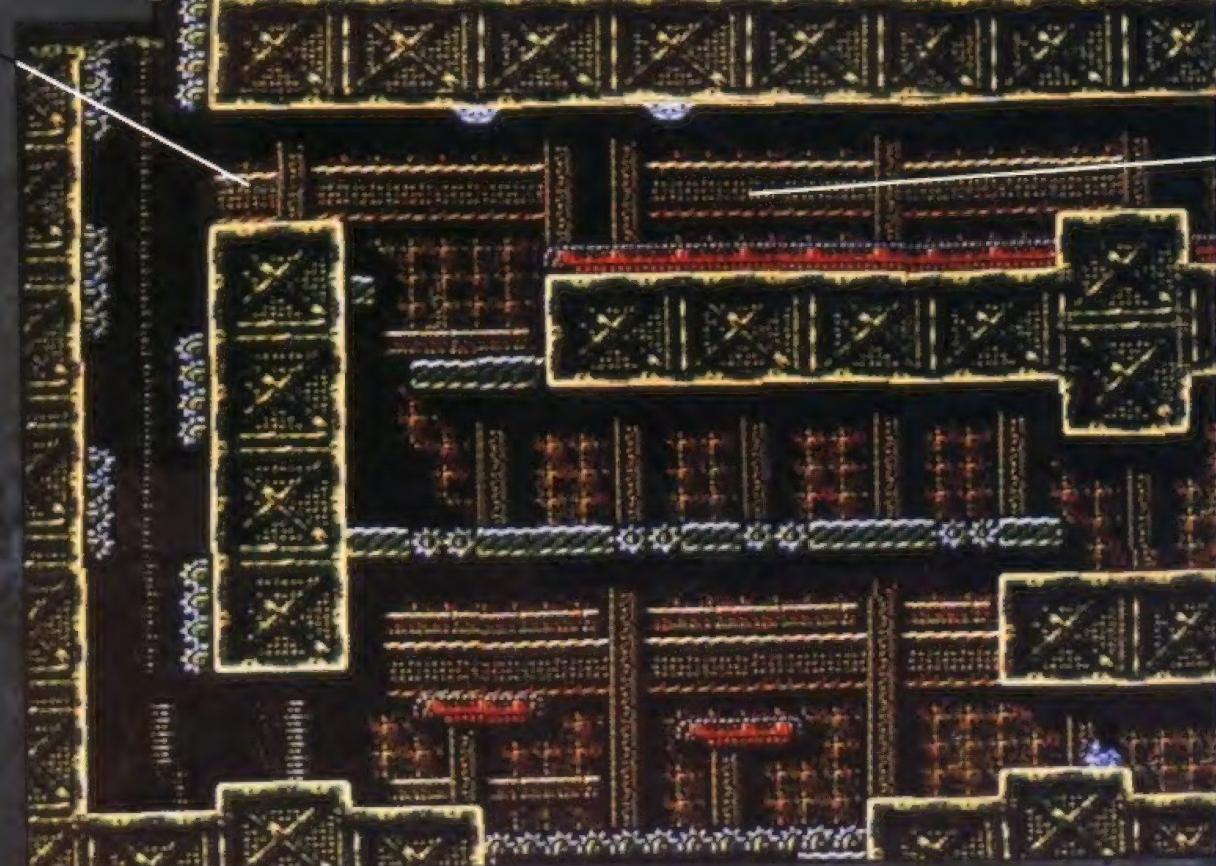


## STAGE 2-3

This is the first appearance of the Drop Claw, and believe it or not, it can be a friend. If you get under it, just to the left or right, you can punch its bombs, turning them into icons. This is a great way to recharge your supplies. Furthermore, if three bombs-turned-icons are left on the floor, the Drop Claw won't throw anything else until the icons disappear, which will happen if they sit for too long. This break will give you a chance for a clean getaway.



If you get right at the edge and push left, Batman will fall between the gears unscathed.



## STAGE 2-4

Here's the level boss for Stage 2, Machine Intelligence. It's best to be equipped with the spear gun before you enter the room, because it'll start shooting at you right away. It will begin with two shots high, two shots low, etc., so learn the pattern, and duck and jump accordingly. At the same time, shoot your gun until it's defeated. Now the dome at the top-left will need attention—this gets rid of the electric beam at the right—but it is protected by toxic drips in the middle. (Trying to shoot on a conveyor is tough anyway, so park on the top-right platform.) Jump and shoot repeatedly until it

blows up, but drop down below as soon as it does, or you'll get hit from the back by the last device.

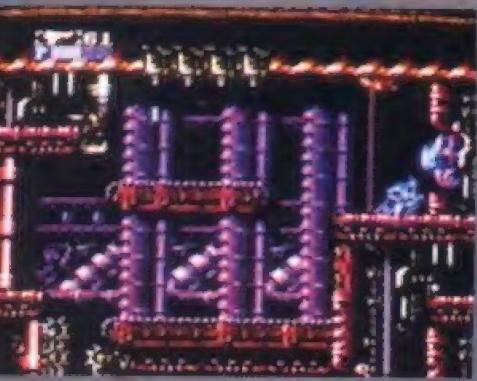
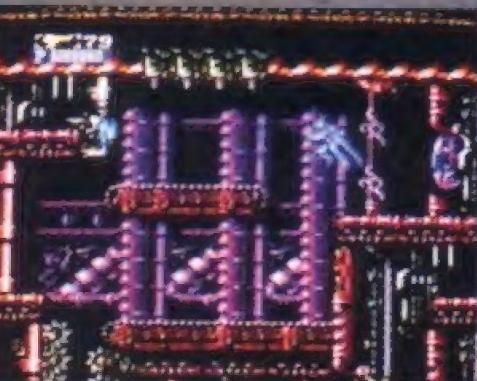
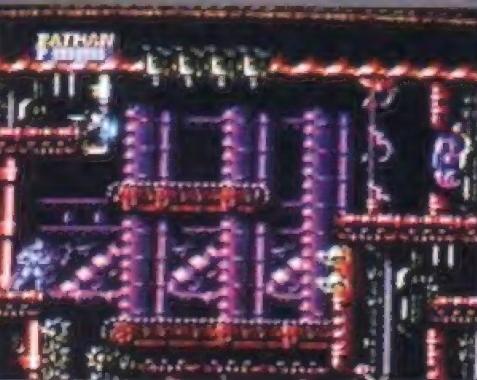
If you get halfway between the last machine and the edge of the platform, you'll be safe from its shots when you crouch. Then after it shoots, jump up and punch it, then squat again. Repeat this and you'll be out of there in no time.

We're only about halfway through with the game, so come back next month when we finish up with the last three levels of *Batman*. Good luck!

It's hard to get past these gears lining the corridor, but if you jump just before you reach the end of the conveyor belt, you'll fall through cleanly.

If you come up this way, don't let the Drop Claw dump bombs on you. (They say that knowledge is power. So now you know.)

There are two paths here. To take the "high road," you have to drop, grab and jump left off the platform. There's no way back up here if you fall all the way down, but there's little difference in terrain anyway.

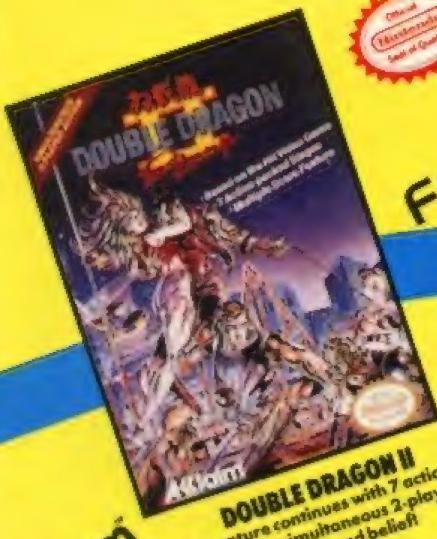




Playing it for the fun of it!

**PRESENTS  
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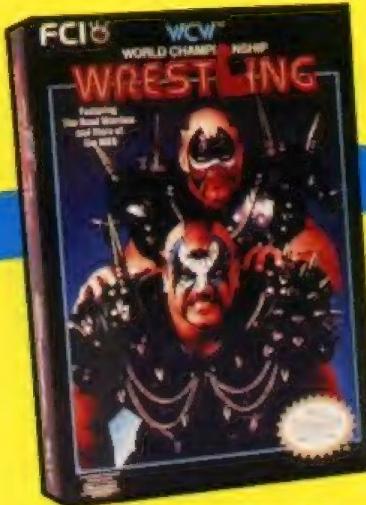


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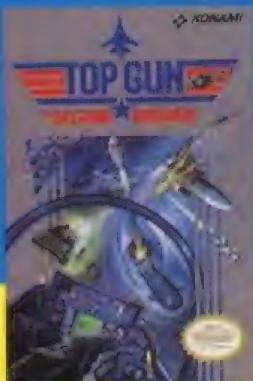
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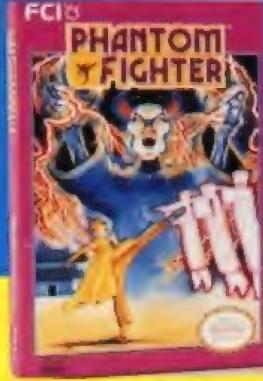
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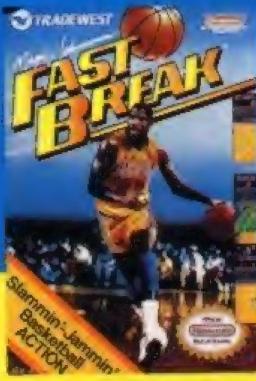
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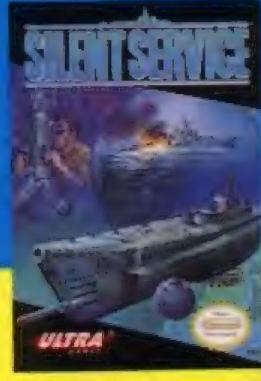
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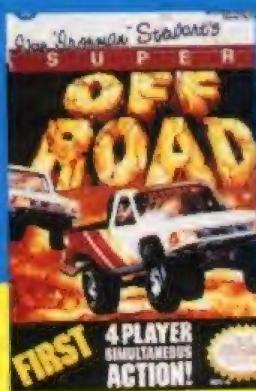
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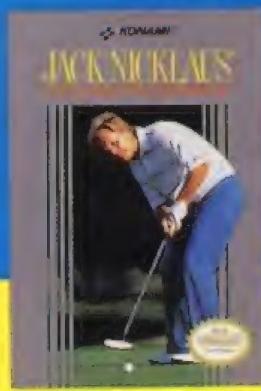
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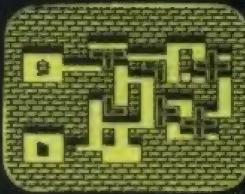
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# KWIRK™ HE'S A-MAZE-ING!

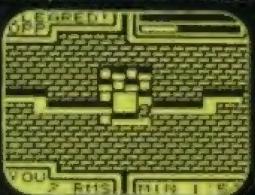
Kwirk's in a bit of a stew. His main squeeze, Tammy, has been trapped, and Kwirk's the only truckin' Tomato with a chance to rescue her. With Kwirk, you'll move bunches of



blockers, outwit plenty of pits, and mash through many a maze.

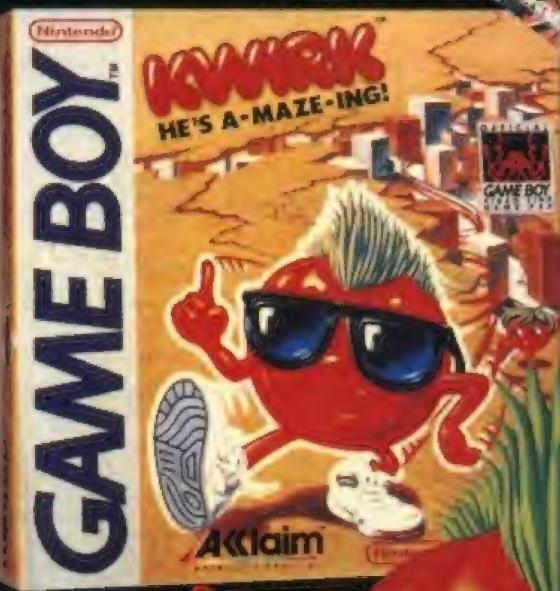
And just when one labyrinth seems to be licked...an even trickier one appears.

So put on your shades, get your thinker in gear and join the a-maze-ing Kwirk in his quest to solve this puzzling predicament.

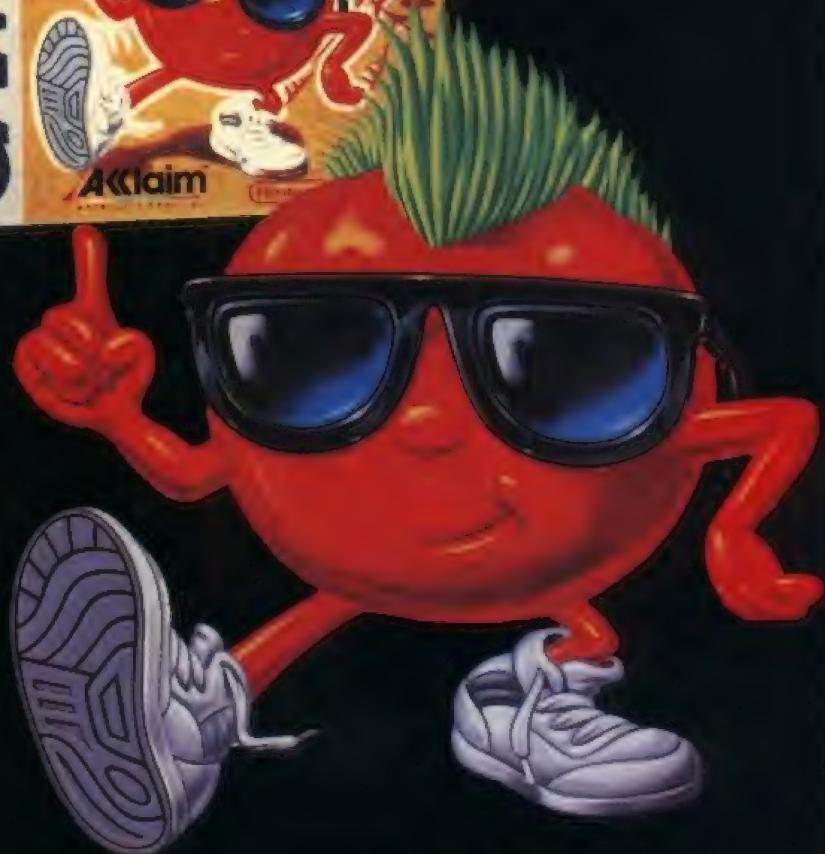


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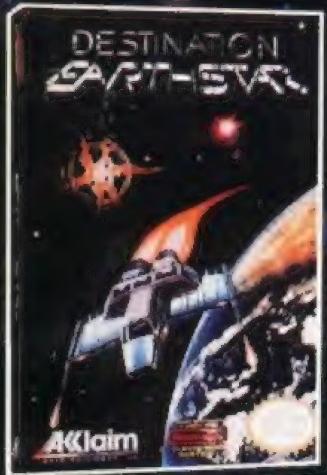


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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

IN SEARCH OF THE FINAL PLATE  
A PLAYERS GUIDE TO

# F A X A N A D

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

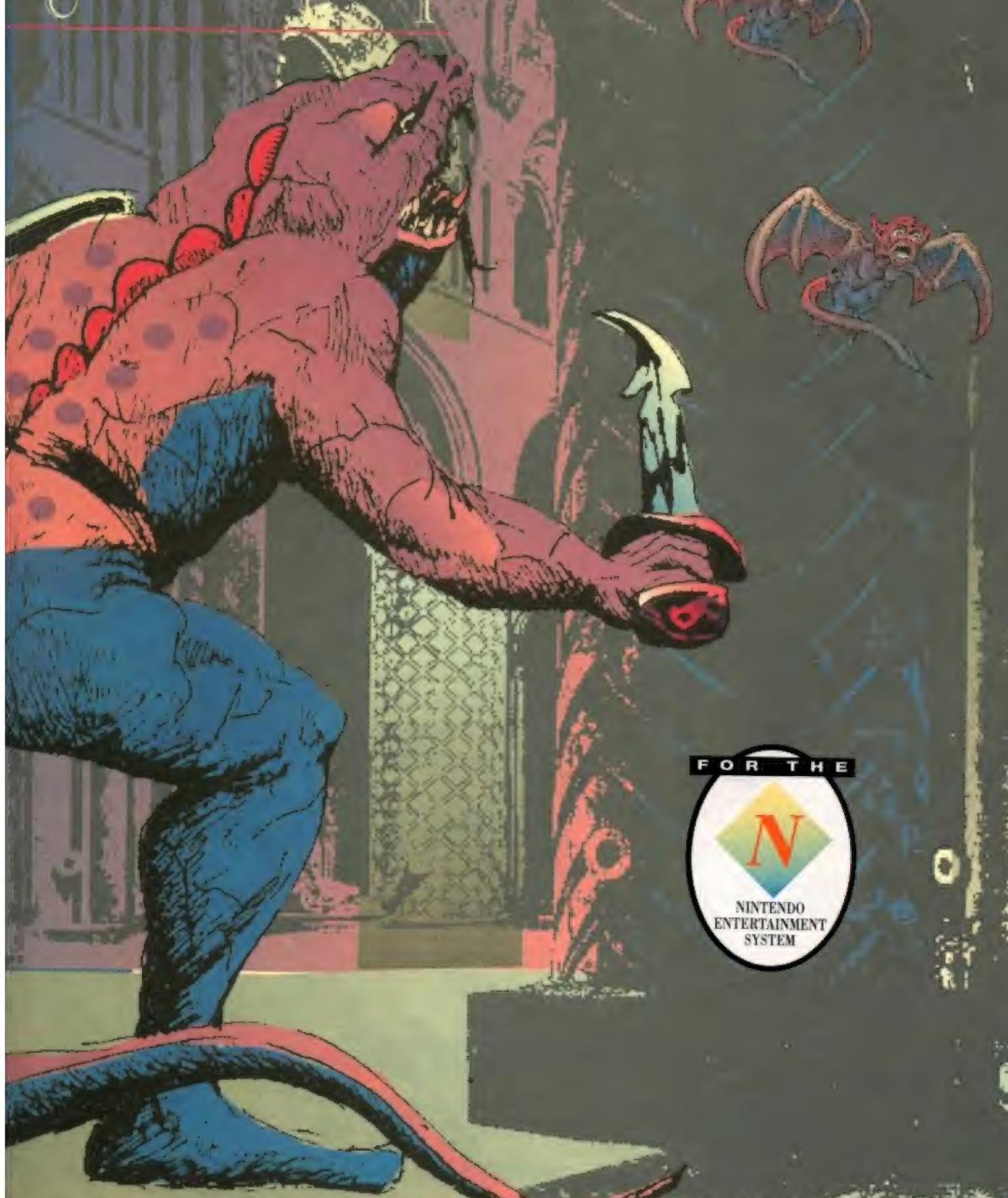
**WARNING:** If you already own *Faxanadu*, we suggest you play it before reading the information presented here. Premature scrutiny of our maps may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you haven't yet purchased *Faxanadu*, you may browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.

This month, as promised, we bring you the second half of Nintendo's sensational adventure game *Faxanadu*. If you've been practicing your swordsmanship, you'll find that in this section of the game the greatest challenge lies not in battling monsters, but in navigating through the many branches of the World Tree and the complicated labyrinths found inside the castles. The mazes notwithstanding, chances are you'll find the second half of *Faxanadu* easier to complete than the first—if for no other reason than once you get the "A" key, you won't have to deal with that horrible World of Mist. Besides the captions shown on the following maps, little needs to be said about this half of the game. So what are we sitting around for?

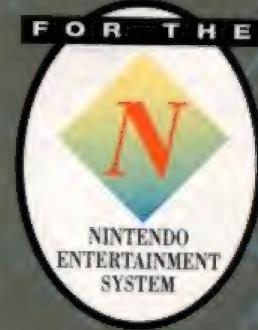
Let's get cracking!



U  
L  
I  
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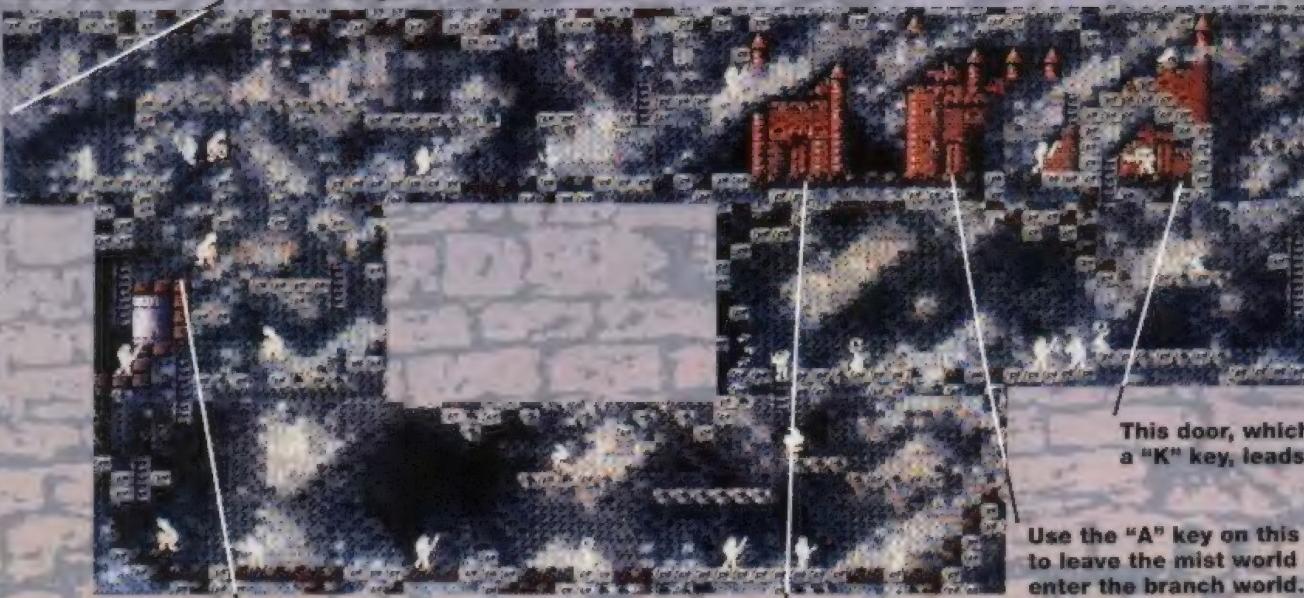
FOR THE



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**STRIP 22**

Move left to get to Strip 24.

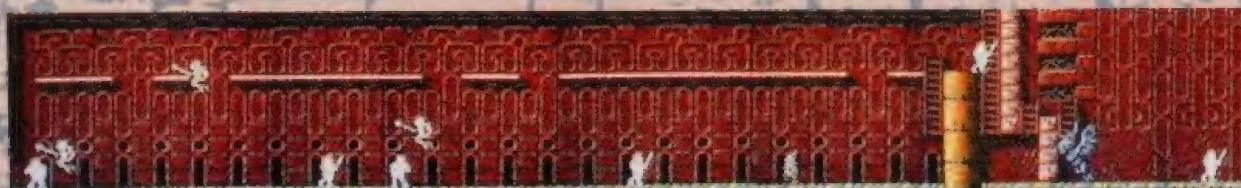


This door, which opens with a "K" key, leads to Strip 23.

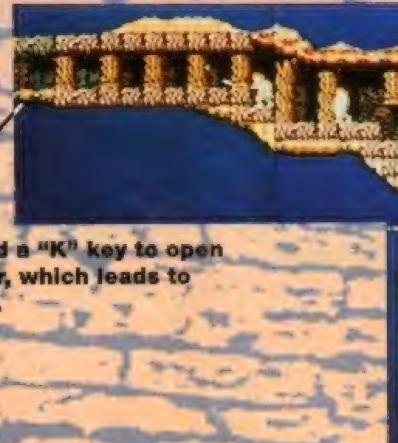
Use the "A" key on this door to leave the mist world and enter the branch world.

You need winged boots to get to the room above this one. Exit left to the town of Victim.

Get the "A" key here. Watch out for the poison bottle on the left.

**STRIP 25****STRIP 26:**

When you kill them, the creatures here turn into bread, which will boost your life energy.



You need a "K" key to open this door, which leads to Strip 32.

This doorway leads back to the World of Mist.



## STRIP 23

This ladder leads nowhere special.

Get fire magic here—for a price.

If there was anything valuable in this short castle, we didn't find it.



You need a "K" key to get into this castle, the inside of which is shown in Strip 25.

## STRIP 24

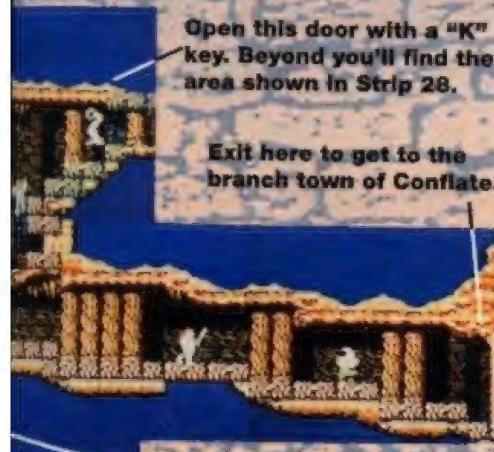
If you defeat all the enemies here, you may get a free pair of winged boots.



Open this door with a "K" key. Beyond you'll find the area shown in Strip 28.

Exit here to get to the branch town of Conflate.

To kill this horrible creature, stand on the small rock on the left-hand side of the room. When the creature approaches, jump and hit him in the face with your sword. It'll take quite a few hits to do the job, so be patient. Be ready with red potions. When this monster hits you, he takes away a lot of energy. When the battle is over, you'll get the black onyx, which will help protect you from attack.



Watch out for this poison bottle!



## STRIP 27: CONFLATE



In the town of Conflate you can acquire a slew of new clues and buy supplies including the giant blade, the magic shield, the winged boots and the red potion.

## STRIP 28:



This door leads back to Strip 27.

Annihilate all enemies in this area, and you may receive a jar of ointment for your troubles.

If you fall through the break in the branch, you wind up in the area shown in Strip 29.

## STRIP 29:



You'll find an hourglass here.

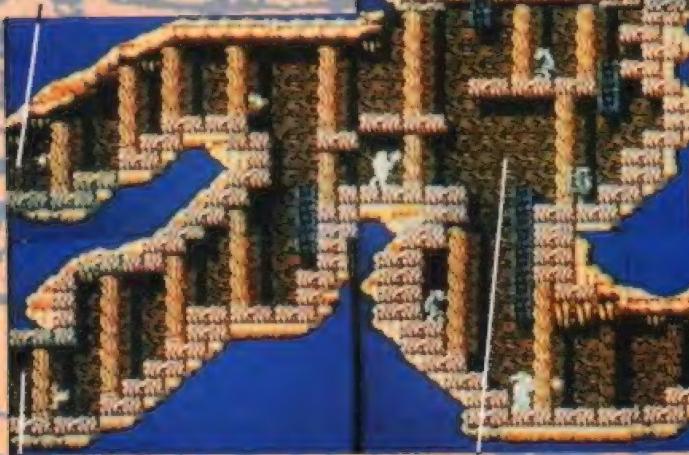
Jump over this poison bottle.

This doorway leads to the bottom left door on Strip 30.



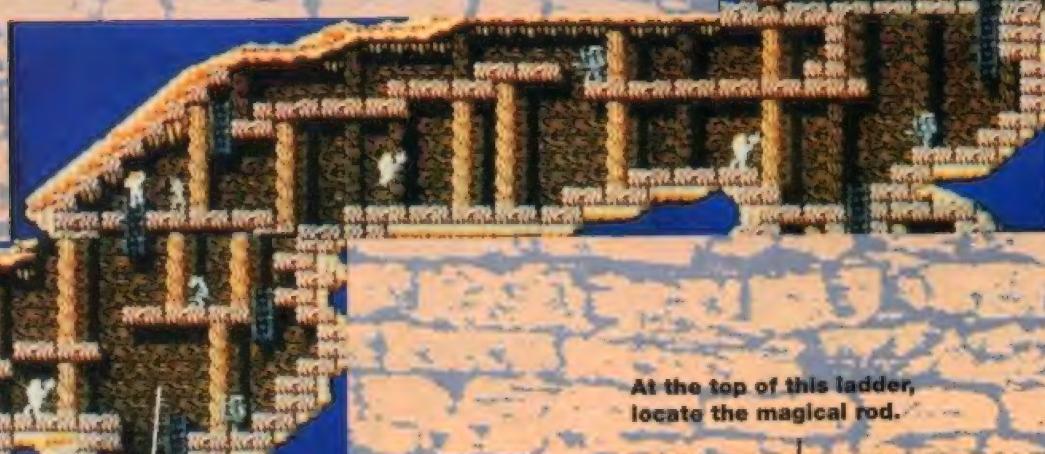
## STRIP 30

Take this door to Strip 28.



Exit here to Strip 29.

Try not to fall down this hole. Even though there's a ladder here, getting back up is difficult, thanks to the swordsman waiting at the top.



At the top of this ladder, locate the magical rod.



Stand on the very edge of the ledge, and keep swinging your weapon. Once you defeat this enemy, you'll be awarded the battle suit.

## STRIP 31: DAYBREAK



Step through this door, and you'll find yourself in the area shown in Strip 30.



In the town of Daybreak you can purchase "K" and "Q" keys, the tilte, the giant blade or red potion.

## STRIP 32:



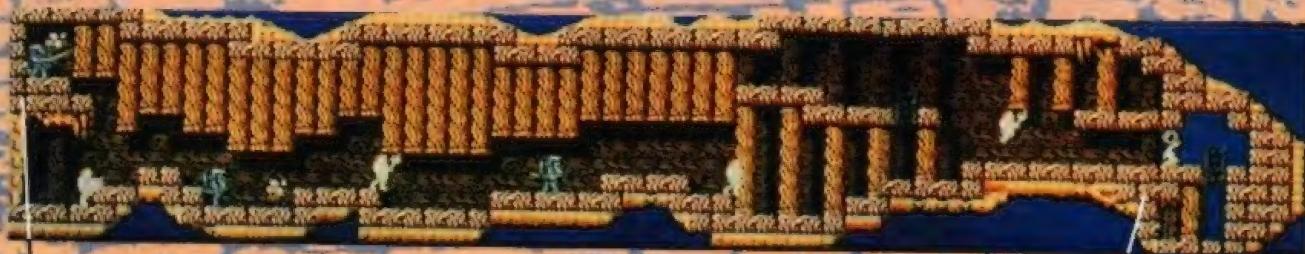
To beat this munching meanie, stand to the right. When he approaches, jump and hit him in the face. It takes careful timing to get the job done, but once this guy's dead, you'll get the battle helmet.

Exit here to return to Strip 31.



Exit here to get to the branch town of Daybreak.

## STRIP 33



Go left here to reach the town of Daybreak.



This door will open only if you have a certain ring. Get the ring from a guru in one of the towns. Once you pass through the door, you'll be in the area shown in Strip 34.

## STRIP 34



In this castle, get an important clue.

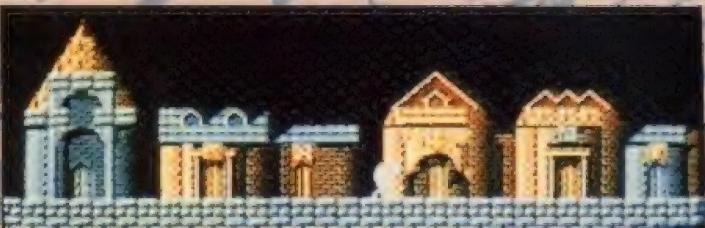


Nothing but trouble exists in this castle.



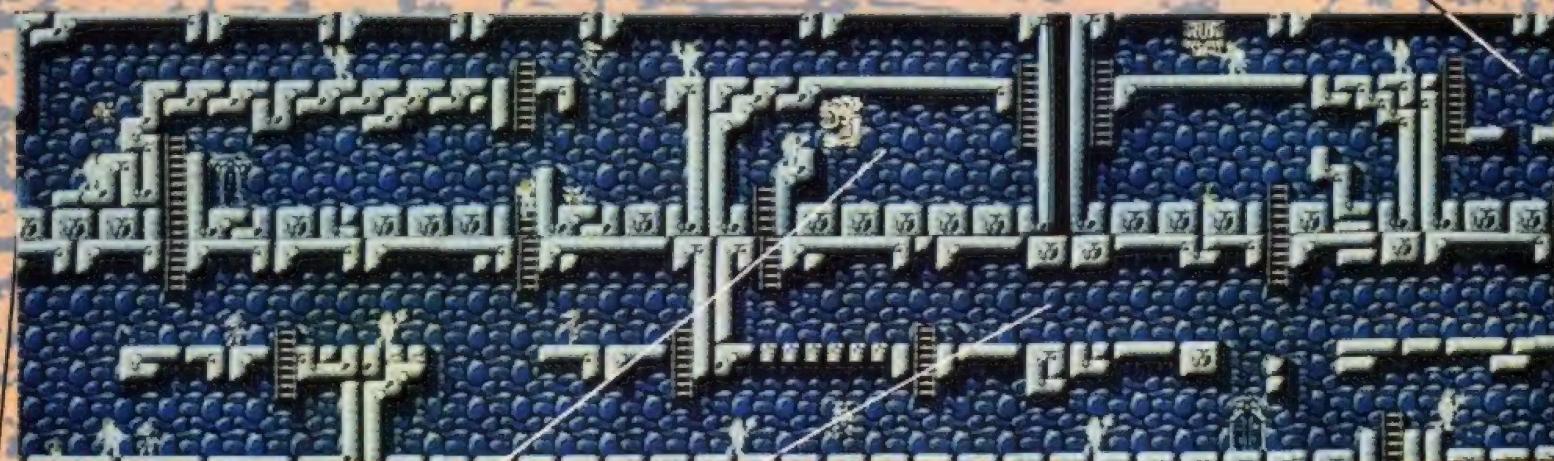
## STRIP 35: DART MOOR

In Dartmoor you can get a "K" key, a giant blade and red potion.



These nests produce an endless stream of airborne enemies. Use magic to shoot the nests down.

## STRIP 36



Use this door to get back to Strip 34.

This corridor continues forever, repeating the same rooms over and over.

Stay on the left-hand ledge, and you'll beat this horrid creature with ease.

Approach this castle after locating the Dragon Slayer sword, and you'll get the Demon Ring, which will unlock the final door.



This door leads to Strip 33.

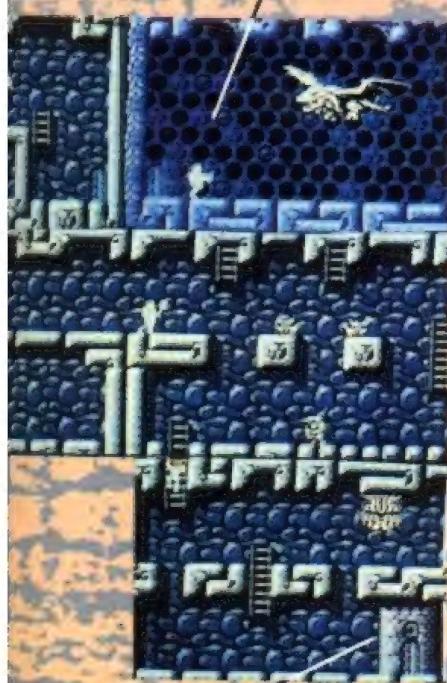
Beyond this door walks a dastardly dwarf. Exit to the right, and you'll be in the branch town of Dartmoor.

To enter this castle, you need a special ring. Get the ring from the guru found in a certain labyrinth. The door on the right leads to the Evil Place, where you'll encounter your final confrontation.



This doorway leads to the labyrinth displayed in Strip 36.

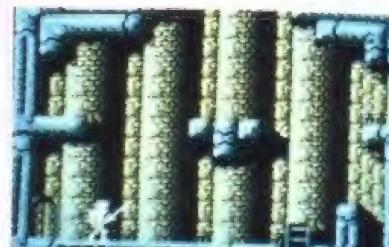
Here you must battle the king of the dwarfs, who has been changed into a dragon by the Evil One. This is a tough battle, so bring lots of red potion with you. When the king lies dead, Dragon Slayer will be yours.



Only a dwarf lurks behind this door.

## FINAL MAZE

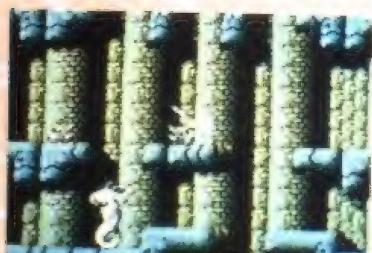
Faxanadu's final level is a confusing labyrinth in which rooms do not always lead where you'd logically expect them to. Although it's possible to sketch a map of this area (as you must), if you want to be sure you've tried all the exits, it'll be a confusing job to say the least.



You begin the final search for the Evil One in this room.



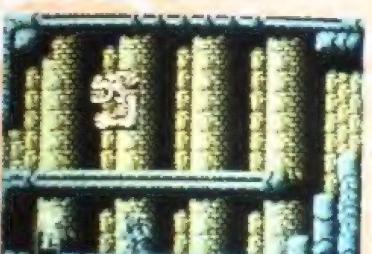
Some rooms in this confusing maze contain not only poison bottles, but also ladders that at first seem inaccessible.



You will face many of the dangerous monsters from your previous quests, including the giant snake...



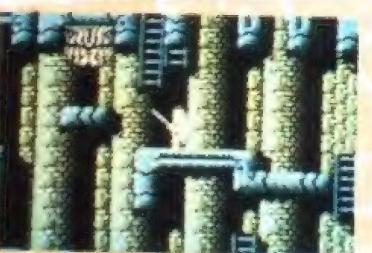
...the bat monster...



...and the ogre giant.



Watch out for rooms harboring creatures like the one shown here—they drop boulders on your head.



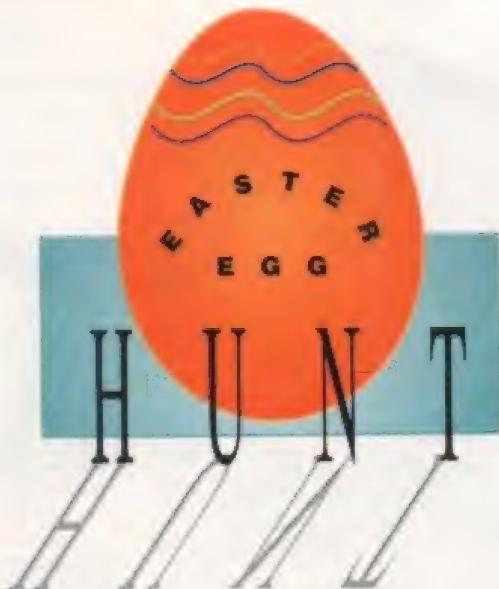
When you find the rooms containing the creature nests, you'll be near your final goal.



In the last room you'll have to defeat the Evil One himself. If you're fully powered-up, this creature is not too hard to beat. Good luck!

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks shown, the more valuable the hint!

Hey, gamers! We're looking for all sorts of secrets that you've discovered in your games, and we're willing to pay for them. If you've found continues, special modes or sound tests that you want to pass along, send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up  
D = Down  
L = Left  
R = Right  
A = "A" button  
B = "B" button

## DOUBLE DRAGON II

(Acclaim for the NES)



How would you like to play through this game with a lot of extra men and points? If you would, then first select the two-player Game B mode. You'll notice that every time you kill the other player, you're awarded an extra man. If you take turns bashing each other, you'll rack up a lot of extra points as well.

### 5 Joysticks

One the best finds so far this year comes from R. Stewart of Cleveland, Ohio.

To continue on Missions 1-3, when "Game Over" appears on the screen press U, R, D, L, A, B, then START. Now you'll have the option of starting a new game or continuing.

### 5 Joysticks

For Missions 4-6, try pushing U, D, L, R, B, A, A, then START when "Game Over" is on the screen, in order to get the continue prompt.



## SELECT PLAYER



## Golden Axe

(Sega for the Genesis)



Keith Frost of Avenal, California, sent in a level select for this great adventure game. To initiate the trick, during the character-select screen, hold the D and L, then press B and START at the same time.

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VGK

# Revenge Of Shinobi

(Sega for the Genesis)

We've received a lot of letters about the 2-Ups in this fantastic Genesis game. On level 3-2, go to the second elevator and locate the crates that are in the middle of the screen (on the second level). Then shoot the bottom-left crate until the bonus appears.

On Level 4-2 you can find the 2-Up at the start of the section, next to the conveyor belt. You'll need to do a somersault to throw the eight shuriken needed to expose the 2-Up. To get the icon, you'll have to jump to your death. But in both cases, if you purposely kill yourself and repeat the level, you can slowly build up your extra men. (Kevin Knox of Dearborn, Michigan, and Richard Devorin of Elmhurst, New York, were the first to get these Easter Eggs to us. Thanks, guys.)



## STAGE SELECT

1-1 JAPAN COURSE	1-1
'3000'	
1-2 ELETRONIC	2-1
'0-5-8'	
2-1 JAP.	4-1 HELL
'CHERRY'	
3-1 JAP.	5-1 HELL
'ENGLISH'	
7-1 JAPANESE	8-1 ENGL.
'TIGERLAND'	
9-1 JAP.	END END
9-2 NIGHT	
END END	



# Fighting Street

(NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)



David Chen of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, found four ways to make this game more exciting. You must first achieve the high score and input one of these initials: .LK, .AS, .HU or .SD. Once you've selected the initials, allow the continue game timer to run out. Then during the title screen, press and hold L, 1, 2, SELECT and you'll be ready for action.

Here's what the different initial sets do:

.LK—Press in the direction of your opponent and select to do a fireball; press away from your opponent and select to do the Hurricane kick; press diagonally down, left or right (toward your opponent) to do an uppercut.

.AS—After picking your country, you can now select the stage you want to start from.

.HU—Gives you seven credits.

.SD—Allows you to do all of the above.



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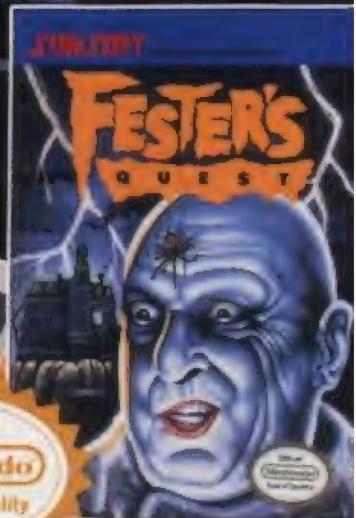


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GAME

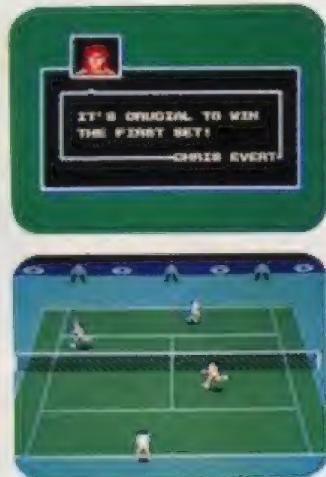
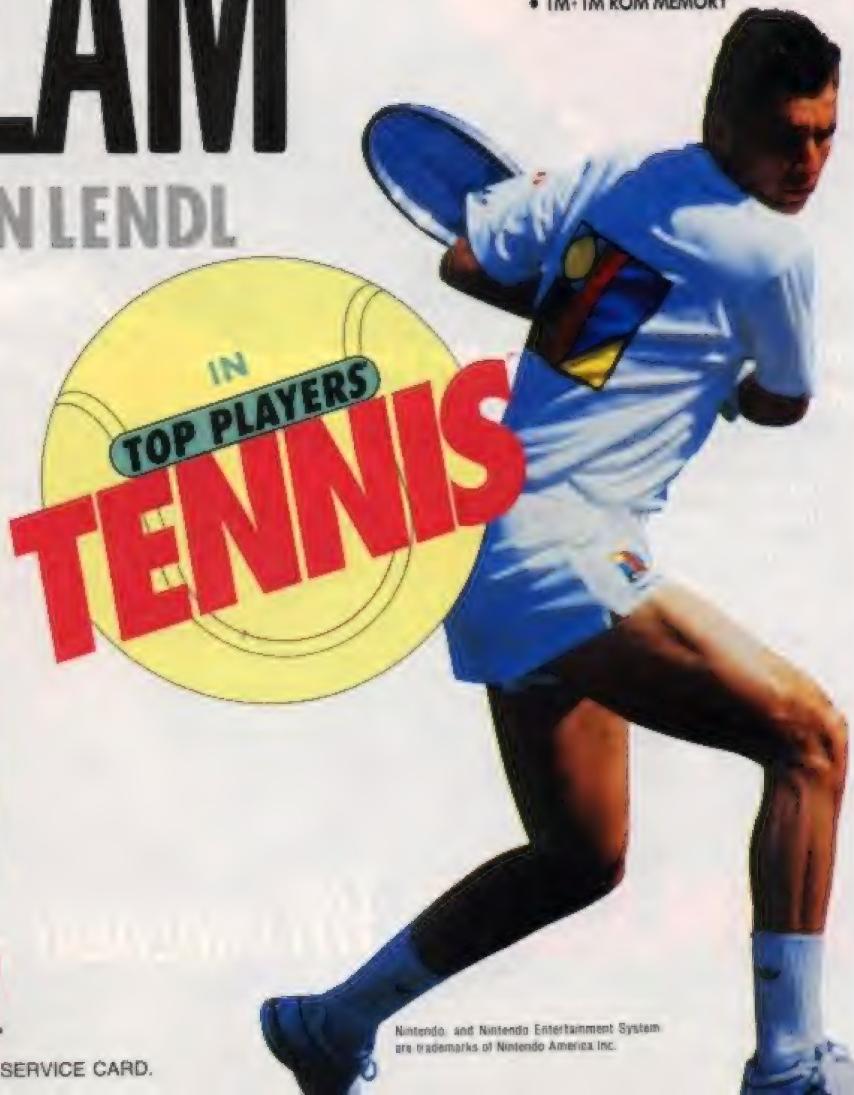


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In mid-March, Chicago played host to the ACME (American Coin Machine Expo) show. While the weather in Chicago is usually cold and windy, the gods smiled on the exhibitors and attendees alike with unseasonably balmy temperatures—and the action inside the Hyatt Regency was equally hot.

VG&CE attended ACME and delivers the goods on what was new, what was old, what was hot and what was not. Here's a report on what we saw there and what you might be seeing at your local arcade:

## American Sammy

DJ Boy—Wolfman Jack voices his

Scenes from American Technos' *Block Out*, an altering of the Tetris theme.

## The 1990 ACME SHOW IN CHICAGO

by ANDY EDDY



encouragement and discouragement as you battle all forms of enemies. Sounds like every other punch-and-kick video game, right? Well, this colorful, cartoonlike game is different because it's *Double Dragon* on roller skates.

**Task Force Harrier**—This one- or two-player shooter puts you behind the stick of the versatile Harrier Jump Jet. Filled with tons of explosions over various, vivid landscapes, you'll have your hands full trying to survive.

**Dream 9**—American Sammy is hot in Japan with its lottery machines, and it's testing the response of the American market to

this game—except that no prizes are at stake.

## American Technos

**WWF Superstars**—Providing the best of the wrestling world, Hulk Hogan, for example, this one's still popular, even though it's been out for a while.

**Block Out**—Also a veteran machine, this puzzler takes *Tetris* and turns it sideways, with the



Puzzle games are big, and Ateri's *Klax* brings their brain teaser to the arcade.

player looking down on the bin that holds the odd-shaped pieces.

## Ameri Corporation

**AmeriDarts**—A new kid on the block in the arcade industry, this company displayed a video darts game. Not only can you use your track ball to toss your dart on the board, but you can also amass

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points by trying to get the mouse out of his hole in the wall to hit him. The machine tosses out little comments if you do badly, making the game that much more interesting.

**Atari****Klax—Puzzle**

games are in, thanks to *Tetris* and others. Atari has joined ranks with a strategy tile game. The object is to snag the tiles as they slide toward you, stacking them to create rows, columns and diagonals of matching colors.

**Four Trax—ATV (all-terrain vehicle)**

racing is the focus of this head-to-head contest.

*Badlands*—What could you do to *Super Sprint* to make it more exciting? Well, you could add missiles to the cars and give players the opportunity to augment their vehicle to obtain maximum performance on some of the wild tracks programmed in.

Atari also had *Hard Drivin'* on display, a machine that's been on the market a long time. Missing from Atari's booth were *Cyberball 2072* and *S.T.U.N. Runner*.

**R.H. Belam**

*Metal Hawk*—As we noted in our AMOA show report, this helicopter-battle game was one of the most original games, and the six months that have passed haven't changed that initial impression. As you skim over the ground, you are prompted to bomb certain targets, though you must maneuver carefully because you're not invulnerable to the myriad firepower that these enemies wield. Thankfully, you can alter your altitude to evade the enemy flak—at



Atari's *Badlands* is sprint racing with an added twist: missiles.

the same time providing a stunning view of the area, nicely rendered in smooth computer graphics.

**Mega-Tech System**—The Mega Drive (Japan's Genesis) is the engine for this cartridge-based arcade system. It allows the operator to plug in eight different games that the player can choose from, similar to Nintendo's Play Choice.

**Winning Run**—This wild driving game will remind you of Atari's *Hard Drivin'*, because of its preponderance of smooth polygon-fill graphics. The realistic feel is enhanced by the shuddering steering wheel when you hit the wall or skid out of control due to excessive speed.

**Capcom**

**Capcom Bowling**—Bowling is a little-replicated sport, but Capcom has brought all the strategy and concentration of the alleys to the arcade version.

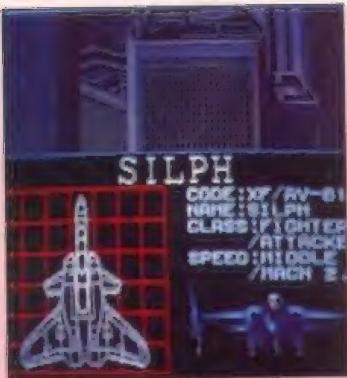
**Buster Bros.**—Reviewed in last issue's *Destination Arcadia*, this game is one of the most innovative videos to hit in 1990. You (and

# FUN TO PLAY!



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Data East's overhead aerial-combat game, *Vapor Trail*.

possibly another player in cooperation) must use your weapons to break bubbles over a tough course of geographic sites.

**Mercs**—Billed as a "Turtle Killer"—most likely because Capcom believes it will overtake *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* as the best game of the year—*Mercs* is another one- or two-player combat game that tests your ability with an array of offensive weapons. Of course, you must avoid getting gunned down or blown up by all the enemy soldiers that are massed against you.

**Final Fight**—Here's another kick-and-punch fighting game with a



*Too Crude*, Data East's latest fighting game, employs oversized, cartoonlike characters.



*Too Crude*, Data East's latest fighting game, employs oversized, cartoonlike characters.

major twist: Not only can the on-screen enemies hurt you, but you can be damaged by the other player, and vice versa.

Capcom also unveiled a baseball game that may end up being titled, surprisingly, *Capcom Baseball*, though a final name hasn't been determined.

## Data East

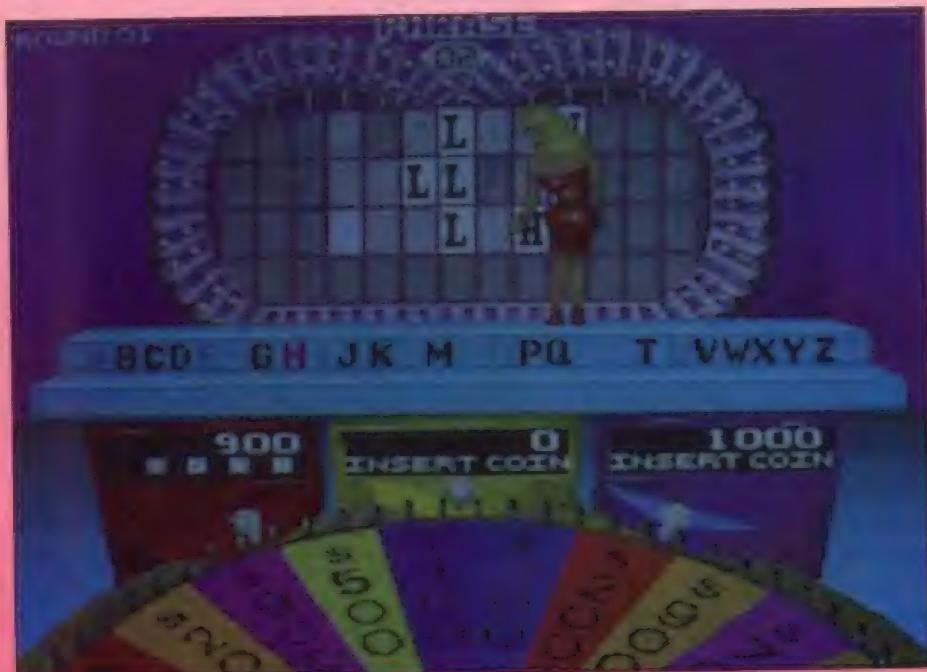
**Vapor Trail**—Overhead flying-and-shooting games were once popular, and *Vapor Trail* does a good job of continuing the tradition. You can pick between three different planes with which to do battle, and digitized vocals add to the excitement. A further bonus, the "roll over" move



One of the show's most popular pinball games was Data East's *Phantom of the Opera*.

one reveals the view in front of you, while the screens on either side help you visualize the scene outside your side windows.

**Too Crude**—*Double Dragon* has inspired a ton of similar fighting games, but this one from Data East takes the genre and pokes some fun



GameTek captures the excitement of TV's most popular game show, *Wheel of Fortune*. The game features a small wheel that you spin and thousands of phrases to try to guess.

allows you limited invincibility during those tough sections.

**Round Up**—Available in stand-up and sit-down models, this driving game puts you in a police uniform in hot pursuit of an evil gang. To "round up" the gang leader, you have to catch up to him and run the robot drivers who protect him off the road, then take the gang leader on head-to-head. The sit-down model is more innovative because it utilizes three monitors in panorama—the middle

at it. Your character, an oversized, severely muscle-bound rockape, can pick up just about anything—be it a car, a concrete block or even one of the enemies—and use it as a weapon. Along with the funny and colorful action, various digitized voices are sprinkled in.

**Phantom of the Opera**—Data East has been aggressively pursuing a chunk of the pinball market, and this one shows its innovative concepts. Most current pinball games allow

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multiball play, but *Phantom of the Opera* provides it via a door that rises out of the table surface. Data East also introduced a solid-state flipper that should minimize flipper problems.

Oddly enough, Data East didn't showcase its new *RoboCop* pinball, but it did have a hands-free *Phantom of the Opera* demonstration. This experiment—which received assistance from Atari, most likely using the *Mindlink* product that Atari was showing long ago (which later became the *Relax* system by Synapse)—isn't likely to become a regular feature in the arcade soon, but it's interesting to see technological strides being attempted.

## GameTek

*Wheel of Fortune*—Though the letter turner doesn't match up to Vanna, the remainder of the TV game show is duplicated here, right down to the wheel on the front that you spin to initiate play.

## Grand Products

*Slick Shot*—Billiards are in, but this innovative game revamps the recreation by mixing video-game and cue-stick talents into one box. While the player uses a stick and a cue ball to shoot, all the game activity takes place on the video screen after you hit the ball.

## I-VICS

*Meta Fox*—This newcomer to the coin-op business showed a two-player flying combat game with an overhead view on the action.

*Wise Guy*—No, there's no Vinny Terranova in this contest, and though only in the test stage (which means it may never be released in America), this brain-teaser game was still intriguing. Using your on-screen owl, your goal is to kick and throw diamonds around the corridors and into doors, without

Konami captures the edge-of-the-seat intensity of the 1986 movie in their coin-op version of *Aliens*.



getting blocked off by fruit, vegetables or skeletons.

## IREM/Fabtek

*Rai Den*—In my view, this was one of the best overhead shooting games at the show. Similar to *Sky Shark*, this combat game pits one or two players against the enemy minions, building up bullet or laser fire with power-up capsules, destroying air targets and those on the ground scrolling beneath you.

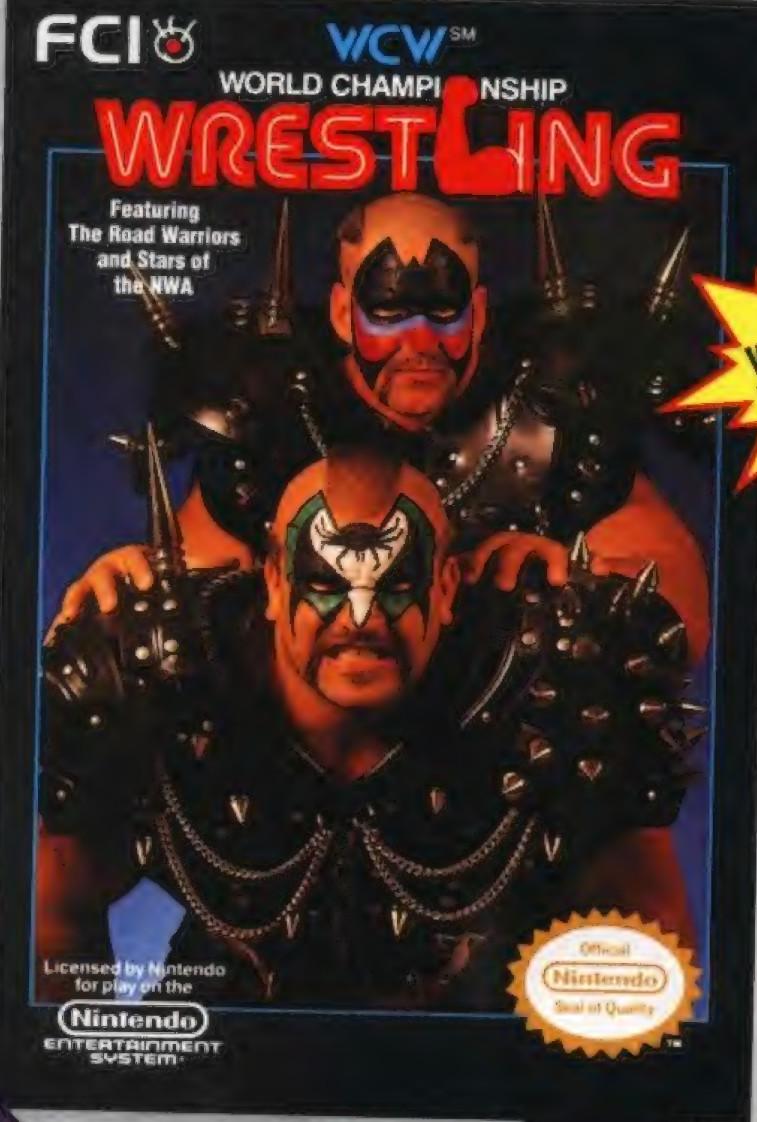
*Dragon Breed*—If fantasy is your thing, this game is for you. In this horizontally scrolling contest, you ride atop a dragon's back and blast anything that comes your way.

*R-Type II*—There's no need to explain this one. It's not so much a sequel to *R-Type* as it's an extension of the original.

*Toki*—Imagine Mario as a gorilla, and you've got *Toki*, a cute but challenging run-jump-and-shoot game with a slew of neat features. For instance, you can acquire a football helmet for added protection or sneakers for higher jumping.

*continued on page 98*

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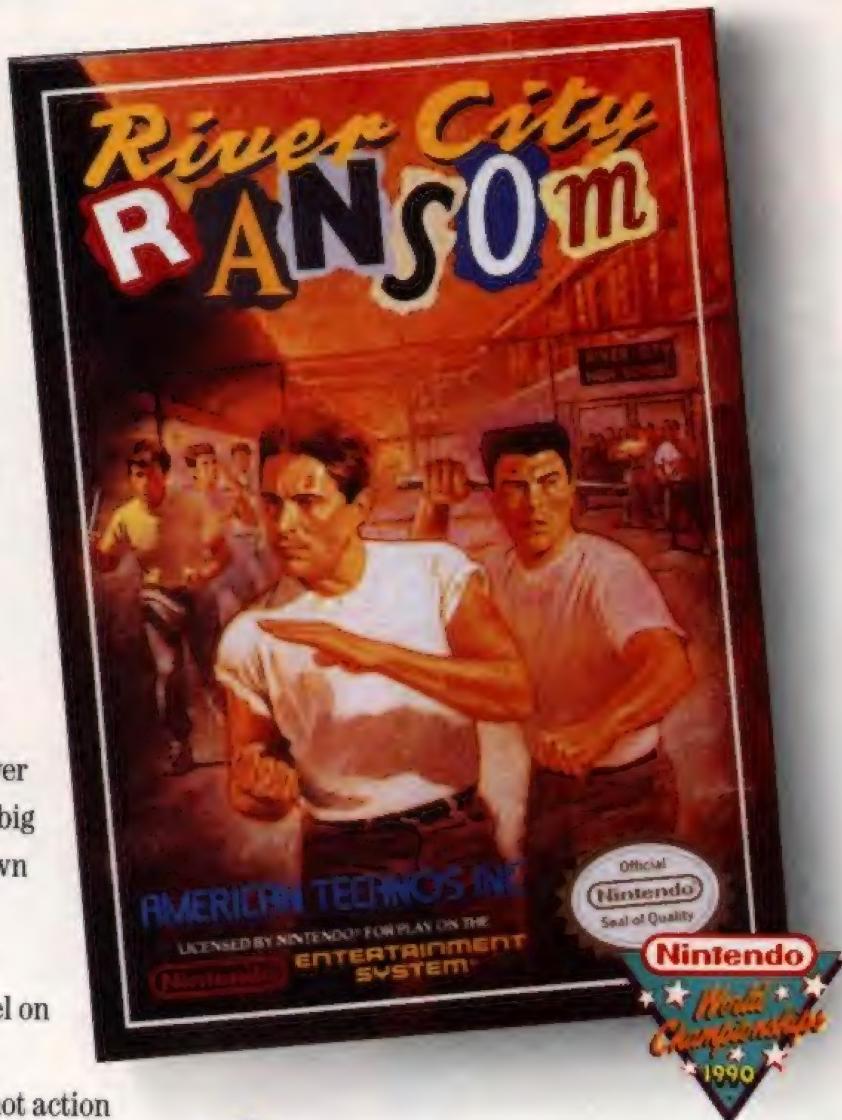
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**Sports Match—Similar to Mah Jongg or Shanghai,** this strategy tile game tests your ability to spot matching pairs. A restriction is that you must possess the ability to draw a line between the two pieces without making more than one 90-degree turn or passing through another tile. We were engrossed with this one for a long time.

## Jaleco

**Jaleco Rally Big Run—**This Paris-to-Dakar race takes you over different terrains as you try to beat out all the other drivers.

**Astyanax—**Legendary Axe-like arcade/adventure that pits you or two players against tons of odd creatures, like sword-swinging skeletons, two-headed dragons and giant coiling caterpillars. Jaleco also showed a soccer game and a baseball game in the "redemption"

category, though they're both unnamed and have no set release date. These are games that spit out tickets if you surpass a certain level, which are then turned in for prizes.

## Konami

**Aliens—**Based on the sequel to the movie *Alien*, this one- or two-player game takes you through various areas of the Earthling colony in order to save your populace from vicious beasts of all kinds and colors.

**Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—**This has been one of the most popular coin-op games of late 1989, and its staying power will no doubt last through most of 1990 as well. Your job is to guide the comic-book heroes through many hand-to-hand battle sequences, searching for pizza (the Turtles' favorite food) and, most importantly, your friend April. One of TMNT's strongest points is the opportunity for four players to battle simultaneously.



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## Leland

**Off Road—**Backed by "Iron Man" Ivan Stewart, a very successful off-road racer, this down-in-the-dirt driving game is still popular after a long run.

Bally's *Trog*, a prehistoric strategy game with digitized graphics, was the hands-down hit of the show.

all the characters in the game are stunning, thanks to "Playmation," a process that induces digitized, animated clay figures onto the video monitor. (*Trog* wasn't 100 percent complete, but it will be released by the time you read this.)

**The Game Show—**The title foretells the story as you attempt to win cars, cash and high scores in this multilevel pinball table.

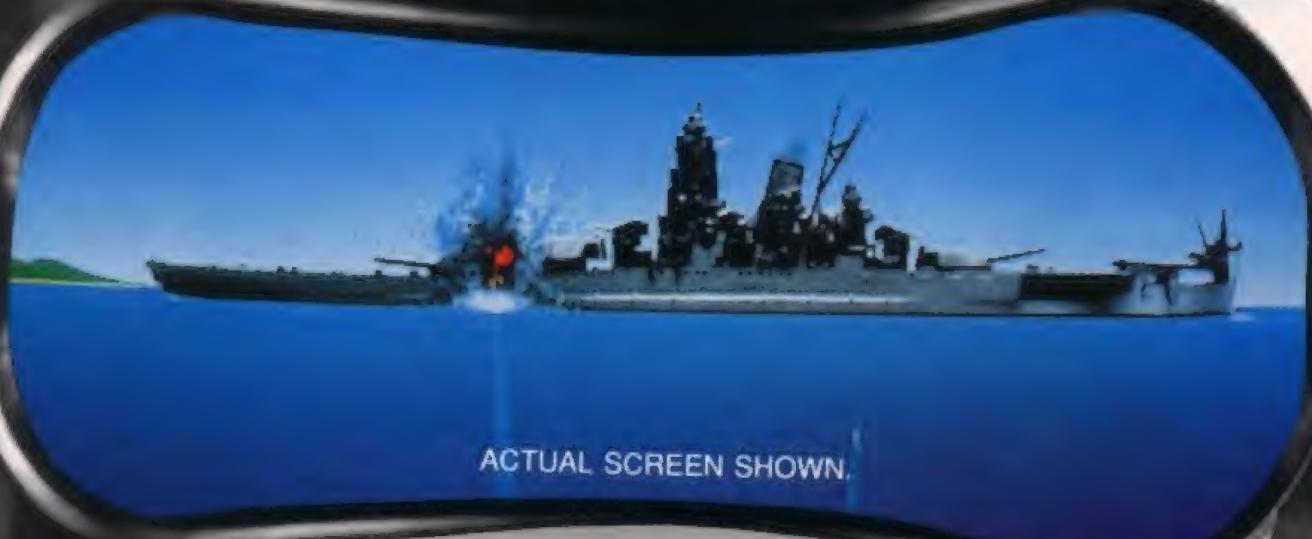
**Tri Sports—**This game takes three popular events—golf, bowling and billiards—and turns them loose on the video screen.

## Bally/Midway

**Trog—**This game was undeniably the jewel of the show because of its innovative concept and look. Up to four players can compete, using bones to guide cute dinosaurs in an effort to gather like-colored eggs and return home. Standing in your way is a goofy, one-eyed caveman named Trog, who does some serious beast-slammimg. The appearance of

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Another busy machine at the ACME show was Sega's unique sit-down shooting game, *Line of Fire*.

## Nintendo

**PlayChoice**—Nintendo has done well bringing its NES titles to the arcade in this 10-in-1 coin-op game system. Among the different games available are *Super C*, *Pinbot*, *Ninja Gaiden 2*, *Super Mario 3*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Fester's Quest*, *Tecmo Bowl* and *Baseball Stars*.

## Premier (Gottlieb)

**Lights, Camera...Action**—A pinball game that revolves around the movie industry. "Revolves" is a good word because a two-sided bonus section can be spun to reveal different point targets.

**Exterminator**—Though the rules of this sharp-looking game are somewhat difficult to grasp, it is innovative in the use of digitized images featuring a detached hand. This hand is used to grab or swat bugs, as well as pound other items so that you can complete a row of tiles before your opponent does.

**Silver Slugger**—Another pinball game, this time with a baseball motif.

## Romstar

**Fire Shark**—We've said enough about coin-ops looking like *Sky Shark*, but there's no surprise that this upwardly scrolling shooter falls into the same category, after all, it is a *Sky Shark* sequel. Look for more of the same exciting action from this one.

**Snow Bros., Nick and Tom**—Similar to *Bubble Bobble*, this cute game, which will undoubtedly do well with the younger audience, has you capturing enemies in snowballs and blasting them into walls to eliminate them (and acquire bonuses in the process).

Romstar also presented *Rambo III* and *Caliber-50* (see the April 1990 VG&CE for more about this military game), two coin-ops that were shown at the AMOA show.

## SNK

**Beast Busters**—This three-player machine-gun shoot-'em-up is much like an *Operation Wolf*, showing the battlefield from the players' perspective. The difference is that you aren't facing off against soldiers, but rabid dogs, screeching owls and mutants out of a horror movie.

**Search and Rescue**—The consensus on this machine is that it's easily the bloodiest, most graphic combat game ever released. It's filled with bodies being blown apart and entrails scattered around the landscape. Though the game play is decent, many concerned parents will hit the wall.

**Neo-Geo System**—This proprietary 16-bit arcade system is taking all of SNK's attention, so much so it's dropping all other arcade-game development and is

rumored to be splitting from the Nintendo licensee program to develop Neo-Geo software. The first offerings for this system are *Baseball Stars Professional*, *Nam-1975*, *Magician Lord*, *Riding Hero* and *Top Players Golf*, though others are in development. (The interesting twist in this story is that SNK is also rumored to be planning a release of the Neo-Geo system for the home market at the Summer CES, though reports that the cartridges are purported to be rented-only, rather than sold, make this story stranger. We'll keep you updated as this scenario develops.)

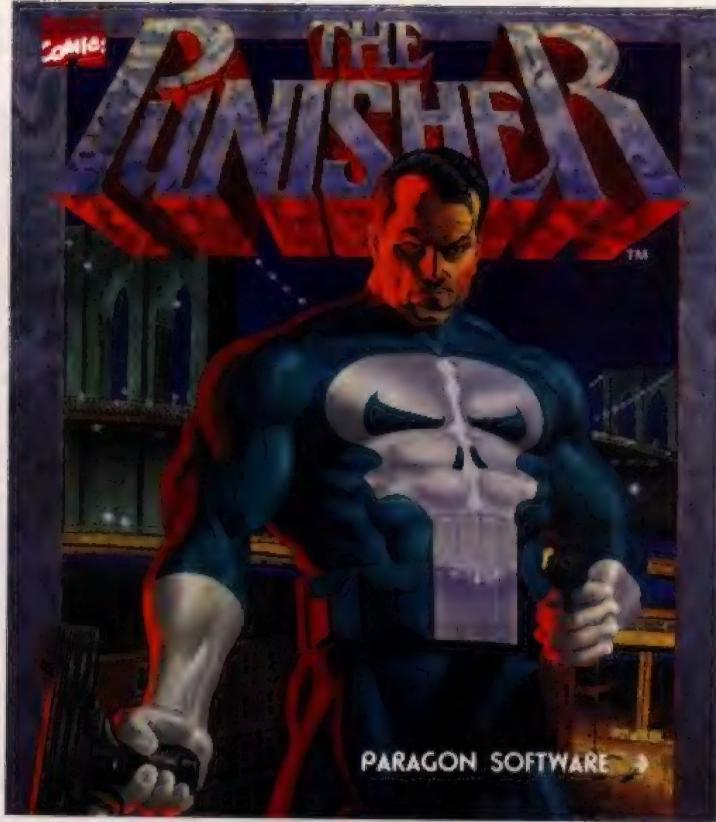
## Sega

**Line of Fire**—This two-player machine-gun battle turns *Operation Wolf* around by sitting you down in the back of a jeep, obliterating anything that moves. And it isn't limited to scrolling in one particular direction—you can find yourself suddenly turning a corner and having your perspective change drastically.

**M.V.P.**—Yet another baseball game. This one is different because

Taito's *Cadash* is a fantasy role-playing game that has the ability to network up to four machines.





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all the players are animals, but game play looks similar to most others.

**Bloxeed**—A sequel to *Tetris*, this puzzler enhances the original by allowing you to complete lines with special pieces. These bonus blocks can offer support in different ways, such as bombing part of the bin or letting you control a character to place single, square pieces at selected gaps on the board.

**Alien Storm**—Up to three players can compete in *Storm*, an aliens-run-amok-in-your-neighborhood game. In it you have various goofy-looking creatures who must be stopped, and your on-screen robot is the offensive weapon. The game switches between being a horizontally scrolling and a point-of-view shoot-'em-up.

**G-LOC (Loss of Consciousness by G-Force)**—*After Burner* lead the way for Sega's trademark perspective flying game; *G-LOC* follows in its footsteps well. You're again piloting a fighter plane, looking out through the windshield with legions of enemies swooping in on you, but you have bombs and bullets to help pull you out of any jam.

*G-LOC* has three modes of play—easy, medium and hard—which take advantage of the various controls in different ways. In addition, the game comes in three configurations: stand-up, sit-down and sit-down with realistic motion.

Sega also reshewed *Turbo Out Run*, a timeless motorcycle racing game, and *Galaxy Force*, a sit-down arcade game that is about as close to an amusement park ride as you can get. This outer space shoot-'em-up yaws and rolls you relative to the attitude of the on-screen spaceship you're guiding.

## Sharp Image Electronics

**Air Buster**—This one- or two-

player game puts you in flight against enemy pilots. You try to destroy as many other planes as you can—what else is new?—picking up power-ups to enhance your weaponry along the way.

## Taito

**Golden Key Golf**—Better known



*Battle Shark*, by Taito, is a submarine combat simulation that features fast action and feedback in the controls when your craft is hit.

in most computer circles as Incredible Technologies (among other things, the programmers of Cinemaware's *Three Stooges* and a TurboGrafx-16 licensee), its arcade division has created a behind-the-golfer contest that adequately portrays the challenging links with smooth graphics.

## Taito

**Cadash**—It's odd to find an RPG (role-playing game) quarter-sucker, but that's what Taito has created. Though it contains lots of arcade action—as you battle evil trees, aggressive blobs and other weird

beasts—it also requires that you choose between different characters and gather gold to buy weapons and gear for your trek. *Cadash* also demonstrates Taito's communications system, which enables up to four machines to be networked together for simultaneous, cooperative play.

**Battle Shark**—Taito did the point-of-view battlefield game justice in *Operation Wolf*; now they've performed a similarly adequate job in this fast-paced submarine simulator. *Battle Shark* provides an increased level of tension by adding a shimmer to the periscope when your craft is struck by enemy fire.

**WGP**—Motorcycle racing hits the arcade screens once again in this semi-sitdown machine. The speedy point-of-view action might give you motion sickness.

**SCI (Special Criminal Investigation)**—Bring Pole Position into 1990 and you'll have *SCI*, a game that mixes driving with combat elements.

## Tecmo

**Tecmo World Cup '90**—Soccer is the focus for this intense global sporting event in three-quarters overhead perspective.

## Williams

**Whirlwind**—First it was *Earthshaker*, the earthquake-themed pinball disaster. The same designer has shifted his attention to another act of God, the monsoon, which features such innovation as three spinning disks in the center of the machine that alter the ball's path.

**Zero Wing**—Two players can cooperate to engage outer space characters in this horizontally scrolling shooter packed with power-ups, exotic weapons and myriad explosions. When two players compete simultaneously, the screen gets extremely crowded, and the activity level hits a fever pitch. □

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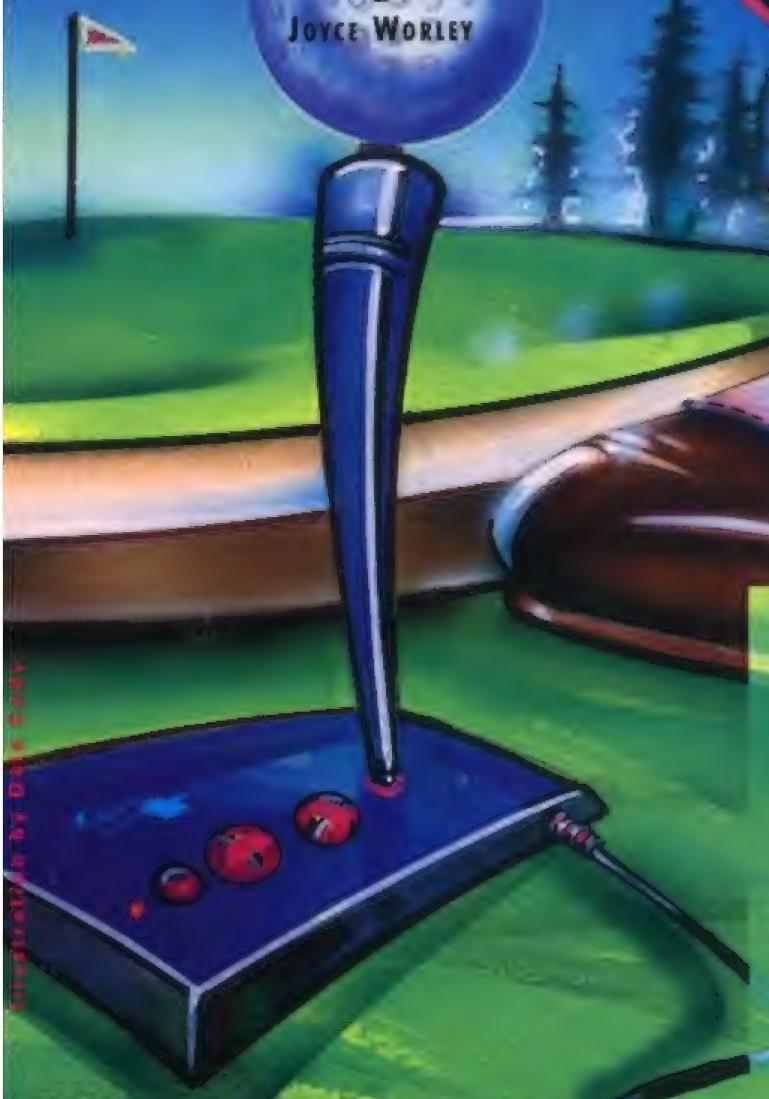


Look for the Power  
Glove in the movie  
**WIZARD**

# COMPUTER COUNTRY CLUB

*The State of the Art in  
Golf Simulations*

BY  
BILL KUNKEL  
&  
JOYCE WORLEY



Welcome to the Computer Country Club! Quite a spread. Has to be, of course, since it holds completely accurate re-creations of virtually every top golf course on the planet. The local pros here are nice fellas too—he, speak of the devil, there's Jack Nicklaus! You might want to ask him about that slice you're developing. But, hey, don't be uptight; they aren't the least bit snooty about handing out memberships. Anyone with the appropriate hardware is more than welcome.

D. CEDU

VG&CE • JUNE 1990

Golf simulations have been a computer mainstay for years, offering a variety of interfaces, visual presentations and realistic frills. Golf is one of those games that is ideally suited to computer simulation. Its dimensions are easily reproduced through the use of mathematical models; furthermore, golf requires a series of fixed strategic decisions and involves a minimum of human movement.

## THE FIRST SWINGS

The first major golf simulation was produced by Brian Fargo's Interplay Productions for Activision/Gamestar in 1986. Burdened with a distinctly ponderous title, *Championship Golf: The Great Courses of the World, Volume One: Pebble Beach*, it offered a breathtakingly realistic simulation of the sport that served as a model for many future efforts. *Championship Golf* featured both top-down and first-person views of the terrain, coupled with a detailed side-view of the player's surrogate.

Although this intended series never took off, publishers were not deterred from producing additional golf simulations. At the time that *Championship Golf* was being developed at Activision, Evan and Nicky Robinson and Paul Reiche were working on *World Tour Golf* with producer Don Daglow for Electronic Arts. The success of this simulation was due to several factors beyond its intrinsic quality: It was produced for multiple systems; secondly, *WTG* was, in fact, the first major golf game to appear on the C-64/128; and lastly, it was published and distributed by EA, then the hottest kid on the block.

*World Tour Golf*, a solid simulation, allows users to select sur-

rogates modeled on real golfers, their names subtly changed (Jack Nicklaus becomes J. Snicklaus, for example) à la the venerable Gamestar system. Each golfer is assigned a handicap, a distance and an accuracy rating. Course conditions (wind and green status) are displayed at the beginning of each round of play. The basic game screen includes hole, par, distance, handicap and the current player's score, along with a split-screen visual display. The left side of the screen features an overview of the entire hole while the right side offers a pseudo-first-person perspective. The on-screen golfer is seen from above and behind.

The game disk comes with 12 courses, including Augusta, St. Andrews, Winged Foot, the ubiquitous Pebble Beach and the daunting EA Champion, a specially constructed challenge course. *World Tour Golf* also pioneered a construction feature, so users can design their own dream courses.



Voted Best Simulation by the SPA in 1986,  
*Accolade's Mean 18* is a solid golf game.

Perhaps the most successful of the early golf games was Microsmiths' *Mean 18* (Accolade). With a more colorful, almost cartoonish appearance than previous simulations, plus a simplified icon-based interface, *Mean 18* strikes a chord with computerists.

The emphasis is on graphics and ease of play. The visual display, using the popular pseudo-first-person viewpoint of *World Tour Golf*, nearly fills the screen. The first golf simulation to appear on the then-new 16-bit computer systems like the Atari ST and Amiga, *Mean 18* makes good use of the expanded color and resolution capabilities of those computers. It has since been released for both the Apple IIGS and IBM PC computers. Strategic commands, such as club selection and player positioning, are entered through various command icons occupying the bottom of the screen. A vertical bar gauge at the left side of the screen allows users to fine-tune their swing force. Before each hole is played, an overhead view of the entire hole appears; this perspective can be redisplayed at any time by accessing the appropriate command icon.

Voted "Best Simulation" of 1986 by the Software Publishers Association (SPA), *Mean 18* features reconstructions of St. Andrews and (you guessed it) Pebble Beach, along with an easy-to-use course-construction mode. *Mean 18*'s success allowed Accolade to release a series of *Famous Course Disks* on a regular basis, right up to the present. Volumes 2-6 each include three famous courses, among them: Inverness Club, Turnberry, Olympic Club, Spyglass Hill, Concord, Doral, Harbour Town and Muirfield.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

The second generation of golf simulation was completely dominated by one game, Bruce and Roger Carver's *Leader Board* and its second incarnation, *World Class Leader Board* (Access). This

Kids, along with those who are young at heart, generally prefer a different kind of golf game to the traditional variety, with its rolling hills, sand traps and lakes. Miniature or putt-putt golf has several obvious advantages over the senior version. For one thing, a mini-golf course takes up a lot less space than 18 holes at, say, Pebble Beach. In addition, driving, irons and woods have all been eliminated, which means there's a lot less swearing and smashing of clubs by the participants. No golf carts to crash or caddies to tip, either.



DigiTek's Hole-in-One is a popular miniature-golf program that has many courses available for it, both in the original package as well as in supplementary modules.



Miniature golf is a madcap variant of golf's finesse game: putting. But these are no ordinary country-club greens! Windmill blades, flower pots and other, more exotic obstacles may block the access tunnel that leads from the putting lane to the green. The path to the hole may lead through several levels and consume many strokes. With an ingenuity that would make Rube Goldberg proud, modern putt-putt courses feature elaborate hole designs that all but cry out for computer simulation.

Fear not, diminutive duffers, for that cry has been answered. *Mini-Putt* (Accolade), *Hole-in-One Miniature Golf* (DigiTek) and *Will Harvey's Zany Golf* (Electronic Arts) all attempt to bring

## THE KIDDIE COUNTRY CLUB: MINIATURE GOLF

the joy of miniature golfing to home computers.

*Mini-Putt* employs three graphics windows to capture the look and feel of putt-putt play. The primary display, a pseudo-first-person view of the hole, is used to aim the on-screen golf ball. A smaller window features an overview of the entire hole, and a still-smaller side view of the surrogate golfer, Mini-Putt Pete, appears in the lower left of the screen alongside a vertical power meter. The Pete graphic and the meter are used as a putting guide by the golfer. The hole number, par and strokes taken are tallied in a window at the lower right of the play screen.

The game disk is available on the Apple IIGS, C-64 and IBM PC computers. As of press time, no additional course disks for *Mini-Putt* have been released.

Charles Carter's *Hole-in-One Miniature Golf* is a visually impressive package that uses a combination of overhead and pseudo-3-D perspectives on different courses to recreate the graphic

splendor of the most impressive putt-putt courses. Some holes, in fact, are so complex that a single view is insufficient to display them entirely and a pull-down menu is used to invoke up to four additional views.

*Hole-in-One*'s major strength is the wide variety of supplemental course disks that interface with it. The original IBM PC version comes with five course disks, and three additional courses were recently made available in a single package. (Both the original game and all supplemental courses are also available for the Amiga.)

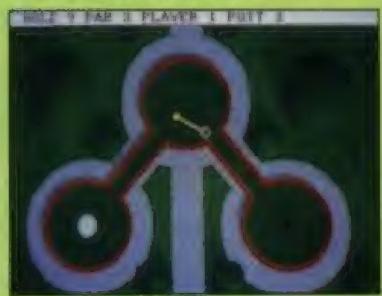
The finest simulation of miniature golf to date, however, is indisputably *Zany Golf*. Will

Harvey's masterpiece perfectly reproduces the ambiance of mini-golf, while adding elements that could only exist in a simulation, like the Anthill Hole, where the target actually moves about the green.



Accolade's *Mini-Putt* uses three windows to display the holes.

*Zany Golf* sticks to a single viewpoint throughout the entire game—an entirely realistic two-thirds perspective. The holes invariably extend over several screens, but the user can access any point on the hole by simply scrolling the cursor in the desired direction.



*Hole-in-One*'s strength is its ability to create impossible-in-real-life layouts.

The visuals are stunning, reproducing everything from the ruffled green of the putting surface to the varnished gleam of the hardwood floor (this is an indoor miniature-golf course, after all). The only drawback to this game—available for the Apple IIGS, Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC computers—is the lack of any subsequent course disks.

—B.K. and J.W.

game captured and improved on the realistic look of *World Tour Golf* while offering *Mean 18*'s simplicity of play and visual emphasis.

*World Class Leader Board* offers four courses: Champions-Cypress Creek, Doral Country Club, St. Andrews and the mythical killer course, Gauntlet Country Club,

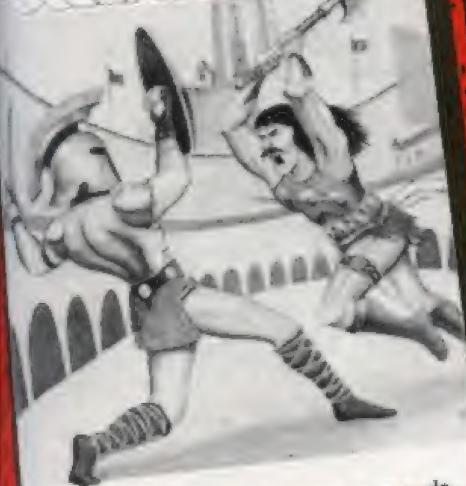
along with a course editor that allows users to modify and save existing courses. One to four players select one of three difficulty levels before they choose a club

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and step up to the first tee. Using a cursor, the players aim and take their swings (on the most difficult level, wind is also a factor) using the Power/Snap indicator. This on-screen device lets users dictate the power and hook/slice of each shot.

*World Class Leader Board* has proven to be such an enduring success that it was recently reissued in IBM format with Real Sound, Access' new software-based audio-enhancement feature. This 16-color version has a sharp, angular look that successfully captures not only the look and feel of the course but also beautifully animates the on-screen golfer. This greatly enhances the illusion of reality. Both top-down and pseudo-first-person views are available, each with full-screen treatment, so the user can toggle back and forth between them.

The latest, and one of the most impressive, entry in the golf software sweepstakes is Ned Martin's and Sculptured Software's awkwardly titled *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf*. Created in association with Jack Nicklaus' Productions, with input from the "Golden Bear" himself, this Accolade product is an excellent piece of work, offering a combination of the best features from past links simulations.



*Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf* by Accolade.

# Tennis, Anyone?

What survey of the genteel recreations would be complete without a glimpse at available tennis simulations? After all, tennis—or, more specifically, table tennis (a/k/a, Ping-Pong)—was the very first action game re-created in electronic form. Pong-type games represented the vast majority of all early '70s video games. Then, in the '80s, during the salad days of the Atari 2600, Al Miller's groundbreaking *Tennis* (Activision)

content of a grueling tennis match. *Serve & Volley* has a slanted side view, buttressed by an overview of the court and a special "Strobe-O-Stroke" window that allows the user to break down each shot into its component parts, producing topspin, slices, etc. It's even possible to modify the skills of the player surrogate, in addition to selecting from three difficulty levels and three surface types, to further customize play.

*Serve & Volley* is available for the Apple IIGS, C-64 and IBM PC systems and plays either head-to-head or against the computer.

The other major player in the world of tennis simulations is a new entry: Blue Byte's *Pro Tennis Tour* (Ubi Soft). The premise here is that the user is a professional player, ranked 64th in the world. The object of the game is to upgrade that seeding by entering major competitions like the U.S. Open and Wimbledon, with each event played on the appropriate surface. There are six training programs with

both two-player and "vs. computer" modes.

The graphics for *Pro Tennis Tour* reflect the systems it was designed for—the Atari ST and Amiga. They are vividly colored and superbly animated. The perspective is a slanted behind-the-court viewpoint, as if you were sitting in the grandstand with the player in the far court facing you and the player in the near court having his back to you.

Since this sidebar opened with a mention of table tennis, it's only fair we discuss the state-of-the-art in ping-pong simulations before finishing up. Once again, we are discussing a mere pair of programs. Ed Ringler's *Superstar Indoor Sports* (Mindscape) offers an excellent table tennis contest as one of four classic simulations. Air hockey, darts and bowling events are also included in this package, all using a first-person perspective. Available for the Amiga, C-64 and IBM PC computers, *Superstar Indoor Sports* is a must-have item for every gamer's collection.

A similar first-person view of Ping-Pong is offered in DigiTek's new *Table Tennis Simulation* for the Amiga, with the additional attraction of a doubles feature, for any mix of computer and human players.

—B.K. and J.W.



DigiTek tests new ground with its *Table Tennis Simulation*.

cartridge was the first home video game to offer a realistic, pseudo-3-D perspective, an illusion which was enhanced through the use of the tennis ball's shadow as an optical focusing cue.

Oddly enough, few tennis games are currently available for computer play; fortunately, the choices are quite solid. Accolade's *Serve & Volley*, for example, uses a combination of strong graphics and secondary visual aids to reproduce all the action and strategic

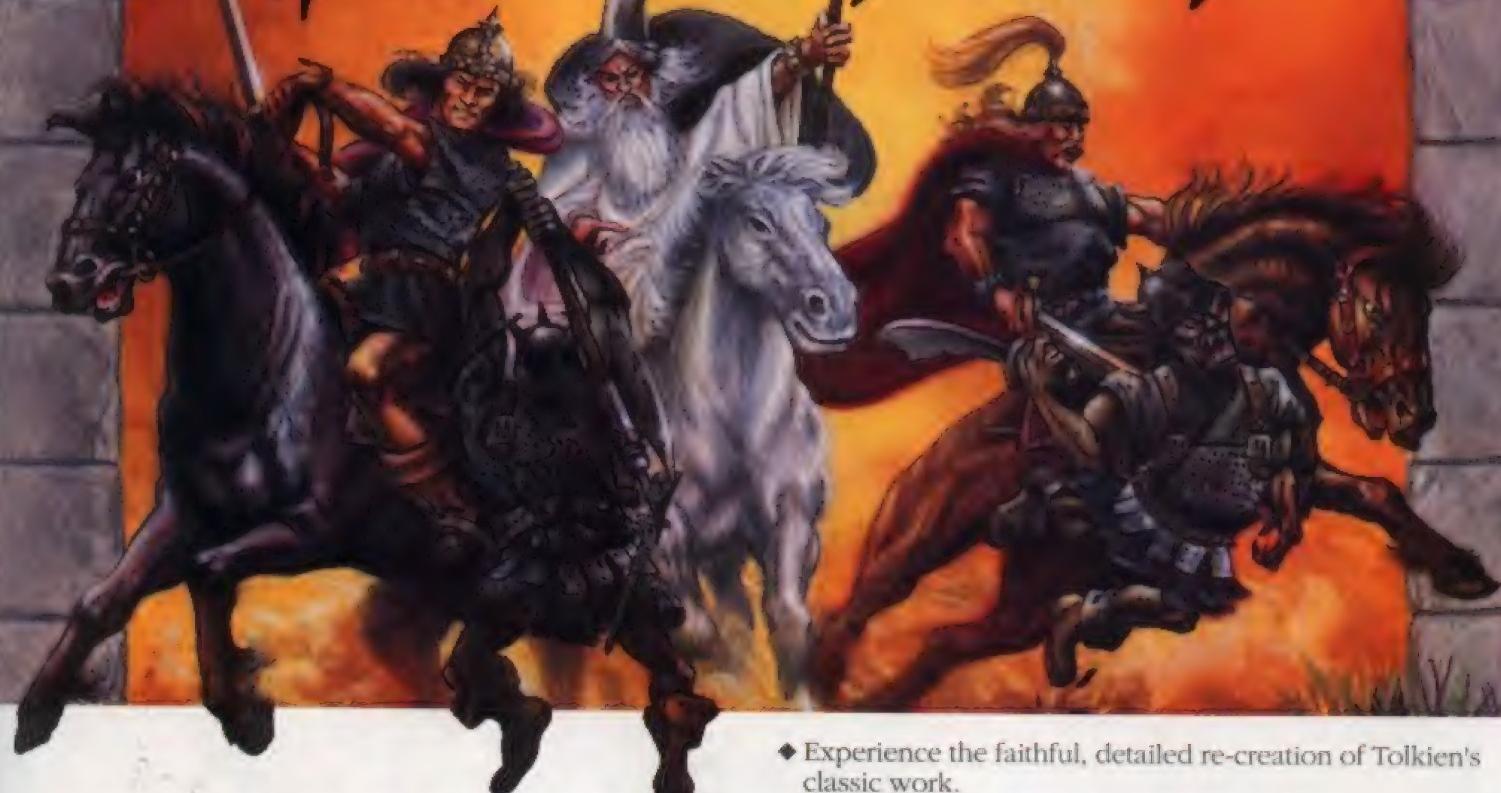
*Accolade's Serve & Volley* lets the player break his stroke down into separate parts.



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Available for the Apple IIGS, Commodore 64/128 and IBM PC computers, this gorgeous simulation features detailed reproductions of the courses Jack deems the toughest: St. Andrews, Riviera, Augusta, Baltusrol, Muirfield, Merion, Oakmont, Royal Lytham and, naturally, Pebble Beach. Also included are a pair of Nicklaus-designed courses: Castle Pines (Colorado) and Desert Mountain (Arizona). Up to three players can compete, or users can opt to go against one of the four male or four female computerized golfers, including one modeled on Nicklaus himself. Features include wind direction and intensity, hazards, random pin placement (no hole plays the same way twice), skins scoring/stroke play options and a striking variety of landscape features, including trees, sloping hills and individually drawn on-screen golfers.

*Jack Nicklaus* includes a pair of difficulty settings and three types of tees (pro, men's and ladies'). The on-screen player is aimed toward the hole through the manipulation of an "aiming ball" that is set in relationship to the pin location. The actual golfer position can also be shifted, and the surrogate is quickly redrawn showing the new perspective. The swing is taken through the use of a vertical meter that occupies the left side of the screen.

*Jack Nicklaus* looks and plays very much like an updated *Mean 18*, replacing the lampoonish graphics with a polished, realistic image, but keeping the friendly interface and game philosophy.

A pair of add-on disks are already available for this game,

and both have appropriately cumbersome titles. *Jack Nicklaus Presents the Major Championship Courses of 1989* features re-creations of Oak Hill, Royal Troon and Kemper Lakes, while *Jack Nicklaus Presents the International Course* disk adds the Australian Golf Club, Saint Creek, Japan and St. Mellion, England, to the list of available courses.

*Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf* has even been translated to the NES by Ultra Software, with most of the features from the computer game intact.



NICKLAUS Hole: 18 Stroke: 3 Par: 3 Distance: 100 Yards Total: Even par



NICKLAUS Hole: 18 Stroke: 3 Par: 3 Distance: 100 Yards Total: Even par

*Accolade's Jack Nicklaus* plays much like an updated version of the older *Mean 18* and also has many supplementary course disks available.

## GOLFING ON A BUDGET

As we all know, golf can be an expensive hobby. This holds true even in simulation form. Fortunately, there is at least one inter-

esting option for players on a budget, Andromeda's *California Pro Golf* (Mastertronic). Though not a state-of-the-art simulation, *California Pro* offers tournament or match play, two courses (neither seems to be Pebble Beach, shockingly enough), club selection (the user's computer caddy can only hoist 14) and acceptable graphics. The hole number, par and distance are constantly listed on-screen, and the player and landscape are displayed from the conventional, pseudo-first-person perspective. Swings are taken by using a simple meter, and the overall experience is satisfying, if somewhat generic.

## THE MISSING LINKS

The future of golf simulation looks as bright as an Augusta green. Oncoming CD technology will offer players what past simulations have only suggested: footage of actual courses, with every square foot of a dozen dream courses stored on a single disk. Users may soon be able to play in a foursome with any three of the greatest golfers in history, from Snead and Hogan to Player and Palmer.

Golf continues to gain popularity both as a sport and as a recreation. Given the inevitable ongoing evolution of computer capabilities, that virtually assures we will soon be able to simulate every aspect of the golfing experience in our own homes short of actually smelling the grass or being beaned by an errant approach shot.

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House-to-house fighting continues unabated. War drums beat along the shores of Lake Michigan and bugles blare west of the Rockies. The martial music of the silicon samurais harks from the east. The question is no longer if there will be a video-game war, but rather who will win it. Three gaming superpowers are battling for control of the multi-billion-dollar video-game market. Some call it international corporate conflict, but to me it's World Video-Game War II.

The incredible video-game business has kept corporations at each other's throats since the days when Magnavox introduced the Odyssey 2000 and Atari marketed the original Pong home system. The decade-long struggle between Magnavox/Odyssey and Atari was a small-scale conflict that was merely the prelude to a larger war: World Video-Game War I.

Atari and Magnavox each premiered cartridge-based systems, the Atari VCS and the Odyssey<sup>2</sup>, in 1978. That heated things to a boiling point! A built-in keyboard and larger memory gave Odyssey<sup>2</sup> an advantage, but the VCS sold for an average of \$10 less and the software library included titles already well-known from the coin-op arcades.

It might have stayed an even match, except that Activision popped up and carried a kicking and screaming Atari into the world of third-party software. Soon dozens of companies were producing VCS games, while the Odyssey<sup>2</sup> had only Magnavox's output.

The arrival of the Mattel Intellivision limited the magnitude of Atari's triumph by denying it the high end of the market. The Intellivision's superior graphics and sports-heavy catalog appealed to an older player who was willing to pay a premium price. Still, the VCS remained the unchallenged leader until a company better known for plastic pools and toy-pistol holsters entered the video-game picture.

The introduction of ColecoVision signaled the outbreak of World Video-Game War I. It was a three-cornered brawl among Mattel, Atari and Coleco that featured deep retail price cuts, runaway software publishing by third parties and ultimately, the Great Crash of 1983.

When Nintendo brought the NES to the United States in 1986, it resembled more of a military coup than a pitched battle. Magnavox and Mattel had vacated the video-game industry completely. Coleco was well



## Who Will Win World Video-Game War II?

by Arnie Katz

*Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month the industry's best-known weatherman predicts which way the winds of war will blow in the hotly competitive home video-game field.*

on the road to bankruptcy and once-mighty Atari was still trying to sell the VCS, which it later renamed the 2600. Sega weighed in with the Master System, but Nintendo outsold its rival by about 9-to-1, so it would be ridiculous to speak of a battle between the two main publishers of "new generation" video-game consoles.

Ensuring the "Pax Nintendo" was the software structure that Nintendo created to prevent unrestricted third-party publishing. The flaming sword of chip allocation kept companies that were lucky enough to land a Nintendo license docile. Titles created for the NES were exclusive to that system, and

many firms decided that it was unwise to risk Nintendo's displeasure by adding cartridges for competing machines.

All stayed serene in Nintendo's tidy little 8-bit world until the summer of 1989. Then came the "shots heard 'round the world": the debut of two 16-bit systems. The introduction of both the Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 tested Nintendo's vaunted invincibility.

The opening of the 16-bit video-game market represents a new battlefield. Nintendo's first reaction was to deny the validity of these new competitors. A Nintendo USA exec was quoted in an industry newspaper as saying that Americans didn't need a 16-bit video game and that Nintendo would give them one when it felt the time had come.

A hot 16-bit holiday selling season this winter quickly showed Nintendo that the new, more powerful systems could not be ignored. The parent company in Japan quickened development of the Super Famicom with the intention of getting it into stores a lot sooner than originally planned. ("Super Famicom" sounds like something Kurt Vonnegut dreamed up, but that's what Nintendo calls its 16-bit unit in Japan.)

Nintendo restructured its software support program in December in a way that significantly weakened its hold over its software licensees. A late-December letter from Nintendo to the industry attributed the removal of allocations to an improved supply of the company's proprietary chip. A cynic might also mention the pressure of Tengen's lawsuits and unlicensed cartridges for the NES by Tengen, ShareData and Color Dreams as a contributing factor.

The Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 threats to Nintendo's dominance would probably have unleashed a marketing war in any case, but the existence of a more fluid software situation gave Sega and NEC managements a sense of optimism for the first time in several years. Several cartridge makers viewed Nintendo's letter as the green light to expand their horizons to include the entire video-game field, not just Nintendo's ample portion of it.

Instead of turning a deaf ear to other hardware manufacturers, software companies are now striking complicated deals to blast their best titles across several different video-game systems. The better marketplace conditions that now exist provide a perfect climate for no-holds-barred corporate in-fighting.

## The Combatants

The war is on, but the big battle won't be fought until the fourth quarter of 1990 and the first quarter of 1991. The participants:

**1. Nintendo**—The defending champion has all the benefits that sheer size, outstanding track record and comprehensive distribution can provide. It's the best-equipped of the three major powers to market and promote its products; its image with younger gamers is an awesome asset.

The new 16-bit NES will have some catching up to do, but this is a company that can afford to go out and buy market share. Its *Nintendo Power* magazine and 900 phone line are mighty weapons in its campaign to convince present NES owners that this is the time to upgrade and that, furthermore, they should stick with the brand they already know.

Disadvantages do exist, however. No outfit can be as overwhelmingly successful as Nintendo without acquiring a large list of enemies. These folks will come out of hiding and throw whatever weight they have behind one of the other two hardware makers.

The software operation is a double-edge sword. Nintendo has a genius for producing side-perspective jumping-and-shooting games that young gamers adore. Now the field's top gun must aim at older and more sophisticated consumers attracted by the 16-bit revolution. Reliance on Japanese-designed product does not bode well for success in this area, but Nintendo has shown an uncanny ability to adapt to shifts in audience demographics. Sega and NEC can't count on Nintendo missing the mark.

**2. Sega**—It took a whipping and kept on ticking. Outsold in Japan and buried in the U.S. 8-bit category, Sega of America is stronger than ever on the eve of its next confrontation. Michael Katz, "Mr. Turn Around," has arrived, and he has already assembled the most impressive management team in the entire electronic-gaming industry. These "generals" have a superb understanding of both hardware and software, which speaks directly to Sega's biggest flaw: failure to identify the desires of American video gamers and produce satisfying games.

Sega has the most powerful hardware, though Nintendo's forthcoming machine will

challenge that advantage. At this moment, its status as the only pure 16-bit system is a definite plus.

No one questions the technical excellence of Sega's past video games. Some critics find them too simple and claim that they don't hold up under repeated play. In the past, Sega relied on translations of its arcade hits, but many of these games didn't have the depth and complexity that home gamers demand.

The California-based company has cranked up its production effort, and forthcoming games for the Genesis and even the Master System will break out of the mold. How successfully the new regime dispels the image of Sega games as slick but cold will determine the company's future market share.

**3. NEC**—Some miscalculations have prevented NEC from claiming the quick sales victory it anticipated when it revamped the PC Engine and brought it to the United States as the TurboGrafx-16. The company was caught off guard by the Genesis introduction and had some problems with its price point as a result. A hefty \$50 rebate, followed by a lower price, helped.

The TurboGrafx-16 software library is a weakness that may soon become a strength. There just weren't enough games during the start-up. But NEC has many games under development, including quite a few licensed properties, so the software shortage could be just a temporary setback.

The CD peripheral carries a high price tag, leading many to believe it won't be a

factor in the three-way war. *Don't you believe it for a second.* Count on NEC to find a way to interface the TurboGrafx-16 with existing CD players to bring down the cost substantially for those already planning to buy such devices for their home-entertainment centers. It takes much longer to develop a CD game than a standard computer-entertainment product, but it's worth the wait. The CD revolution is coming, and NEC's video-game machine is poised to ride the wave.

## Who Will Win?

The horrors of *real* war guarantee no *real* winners. Everyone can win World Video-Game War II, however, because the three companies measure success by different yardsticks.

Bearing in mind that new factors could change the situation overnight, here's how I think things will happen when the smoke of the fighting clears about a year from now:

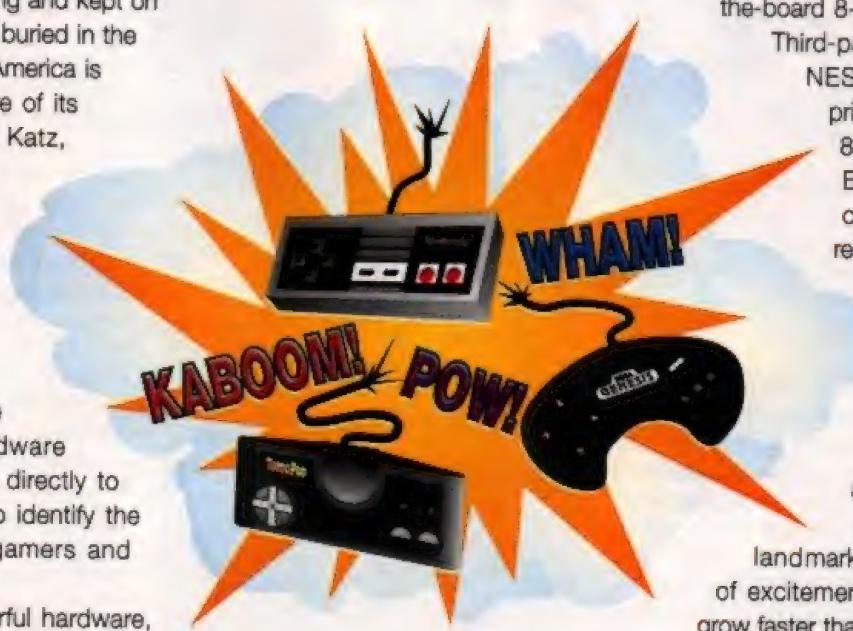
- Sega will achieve a solid market share for its Genesis and probably have the largest 16-bit user base in June 1991. Introduction of a portable will help the Master System, though not enough to topple the NES.

- NEC will sell enough TurboGrafx-16 systems to stay viable and profitable in the market. Introduction of a compatible portable is bound to help too. The CD operation should be making headlines by the 1991 summer Computer Electronics Show, and NEC may be looking forward to spectacular sales years 1992-1995.

- Nintendo will stay the number-one name in video games due to strong across-the-board 8-bit, portable and 16-bit sales.

Third-party software support for the NES, coupled with a hardware price reduction, should keep the 8-bit money machine pumping. But widespread software discounting and closeouts will reduce profitability.

And the overall big winner of World Video-Game War II is...you! Monopolies get fat, greedy and lazy. The competition going on now, and that to come, inspires innovative new products, landmark developments and the kind of excitement that can make our hobby grow faster than ever. It's going to be a great time to be an electronic gamer. ■



# COMPUTER

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## GAME

REVIEWS

### Tank

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

#### RATINGS:

Sound/Music 7

Graphics 7

Playability 6

Overall 7

Peace may be breaking out throughout Eastern Europe, but combat-vehicle simulators are still one of the popular forms of entertainment on home computers.

Extending the technology

from their popular *Falcon* flight simulator, Spectrum Holobyte just brought out its first entry into the popular ground vehicle-simulator field. Appropriately named *Tank*, it puts the player in charge of modern U.S. forces as they face off against formidable opponents in various areas throughout the world. The opponent's forces include the best in the current Soviet arsenal. T-80 and T-72 tanks, Hind attack helicopters, Frogfoot aircraft and other vehicles meet the best the U.S. has to offer.

The game also features the varying scale becoming popular in vehicle simulators. The lowest level lets the player command the functions of a single tank as either gunner, driver or commander. The tactical level is a bit above this and puts the player in control of an entire platoon of four tanks. Finally, those who prefer even more control of the overall action can play the battalion commander at the operational level, controlling four different platoons.

Though the most experienced players will jump between each of these levels many times during play, the game was designed so that the entire mission can be played at the operational level and still accomplish the goals of the many included scenarios.

The rule book is fairly lengthy and requires a bit of time to read, but the material is well written. In addition, a special "Five Minutes to Play" card allows the player to jump right into the starting scenario.

*Tank* action occurs in three different areas: Fort Knox, the Army's armored-vehicle training center; Europe, still the probable sight of any direct U.S.-Soviet confrontation; and the Middle East, likely to remain a potential hotspot for many years to come. The first five scenarios in Fort Knox familiarize the player with the many aspects of modern tank combat and prepare the tanker for more intense missions to come.

Three different skill levels are available during play. The beginner level features all clear,

daylight conditions and perfect information on enemy movements. The intermediate level has less accurate information on the enemy and visual conditions, which vary with the time of day. The advanced level has intelligence information close to that of actual combat as well as an even more skillful opponent.

Quality graphics are very important to any vehicle simulator. *Tank* does fairly well in this area, though it lacks some of the flash in other games. Terrain is made up of vector graphics; the algorithms used are fast and terrain scrolling is therefore smooth. Screen updates do not take much time at all.

On the downside, the views are rather plain and only a limited amount of items are drawn other than the ground itself; mostly houses and some silly telephone poles. These poles could have been left out without much loss, since they are drawn a single line thick and serve only to block tanks driving too close. Computer drivers easily maneuver around them, but the player may find himself stalled by these towering menaces. It's a cute idea that hinders game play.

The keyboard is used for most actions during the game, though a joystick can control tank and gunsight movement. The game does not have a keyboard overlay; instead it uses a separate card with the functions available at the different stations.

*Tank* is the first in what Spectrum Holobyte calls its "Electronic Battlefield Series." These games will all be network-compatible for head-to-head competition via direct connection or by modem. *Tank* already has this feature, and once their A-10 simulator is out it should be possible to add airplanes-vs.-tanks to the current tank-to-tank capabilities. *Tank* is currently only available for IBM PCs and compatibles, but versions for the Macintosh, Atari ST, Amiga and Commodore 64 are planned for later this year.

One of the game's major flaws is the number of hits it takes to kill an enemy tank. While current U.S. and Soviet doctrines call for abandoning a tank once it starts burning, in this game flaming tanks continue shooting. A tank must literally be blown apart to eliminate it.

The other noticeable problem is the scale of play. There's a well-known cliche stating that warfare is "long periods of intense boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror." This effect is a constant thorn in the side of many combat games, including *Tank*. It takes too long to get to the action only



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to have actual combat go so fast that the player can make no useful input.

Tank is a fairly solid simulation of modern tank combat and comes near the standards of other Spectrum Holobyte releases. Unfortunately it falls a bit short of the ideal. But Spectrum Holobyte's excellent record of updating their products provides good reason to believe that future versions of the program will make it a true contender for the lead in the field.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Spectrum Holobyte  
2061 Challenger Drive  
Alameda, CA 94501  
(415) 522-3584

## Hoyle's Book of Games

SIERRA ON-LINE

Version: IBM PC (\$34.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music 8

Graphics 8

Playability 8

Overall 8

Computer card games have been around since early in the high-tech revolution. Containing elements of both skill and luck made them prime candidates for computerization. However, although this form of gaming was enjoyed by a small group, no program has ever reached widespread popularity. Sierra On-Line is now seeking to break this trend with its recent release, *Hoyle's Book of Games*. Not only does it cover some of the most popular card games from the famous book of the same name, it adds a feature missing from most other adaptations: "real" computer opponents.

*Hoyle's Book of Games* is the first of a planned series and covers eight classic games: Gin Rummy, Old Maid, Hearts, Cribbage, Crazy Eights and Klondike Solitaire. One human player faces off with up to three computer opponents in contests of skill and chance.

Klondike is the only solitaire game in the bunch and features three variants: one works with a single trip through the deck, flipping one card at a time and the other two feature unlimited trips overturning either one or three cards at a time.

Gin Rummy and Cribbage, both two-player games, require a single computer opponent. Each involves scoring points for runs and pairs of cards. With Gin Rummy, the first player with 100 points wins, while Cribbage has the players racing around a track. Each point advances the Cribbage peg one space, and the first player to reach the final hole wins the game. The first player to win seven games wins the match.

Old Maid is the simple game in which from two to four players try to match up

**Hoyle's Book of Games brings some of the old-time favorite card games to the screen, such as Gin Rummy, Cribbage and Crazy Eights.**

pairs of cards and avoid being stuck with the "Old Maid," an unpaired queen. Low on strategy, the game can be a fun diversion and is good for younger players.

Crazy Eights and Hearts, the final two games, typically feature four different players, though fewer can be used if desired. Crazy Eights was the prelude to the popular game Uno and is just as much fun. Each player must play a card that matches either the suit or number of the current face-up card, with eights being wild. When one person runs out of cards the round is over. Hearts is similar in many ways to the popular games bridge and euchre, with each player trying not to take the hands with hearts in them.

The SCI (Sierra Creative Interpreter), the system used in other recent Sierra releases, is used in *Hoyle's Book of Games* to produce the same quality graphics that players have come to expect from Sierra products. The fronts of the cards are

highly legible, and any of nine different patterns can be used during play to decorate the backs. Either mouse or keyboard are used during play depending upon the player's preference. Each works smoothly enough that the player can focus on actual play, not the interface. The rules are included both in the manual and online, a flexible approach.

In addition to endowing the game with lively music and sounds from the IBM's internal speaker, *Hoyle's Book of Games* is compatible with several of the sound boards that are becoming common on many PCs.

One of the game's greatest appeals is the previously mentioned artificial personalities. Eighteen different players are available, including visiting stars from other Sierra titles such as Larry Laffer from *Leisure Suit Larry*, Roger Wilco from *Police Quest* and King Graham from the *Kings Quest* series. A grouchy dog is also included to amuse the young (or young-at-heart). Each has their own play style, which includes giving whimsical comments during the course of

game play.

*Hoyle's Book of Games* is a very enjoyable set of eight popular card games. The easy interface and provided online help allow any player to quickly learn and play any of these classic games. It's sure to be a family hit and should be on the top of anyone's buying list.

—R. B. A.

Sierra On-Line  
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## License to Kill

DOMARK/BRÖDERBUND

Versions: Amiga (\$34.95), Atari ST (\$34.95), IBM PC (\$34.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music	7
Graphics	8
Playability	5
Overall	5

"Bond, James Bond." He's known in almost every house throughout the U.S. Millions of viewers watched the exciting adventures of England's famous Agent 007 as he fought worldwide crime. Even with a new face, that of actor Timothy Dalton, Mr. Bond is as popular as ever.

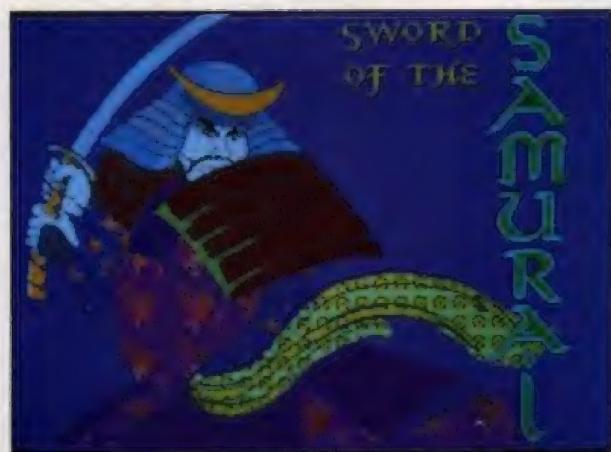
One of the most exciting parts of the Bond movies is the action, and DoMark attempted to capture this essence in their recent arcade-style release, *License to Kill*. Based on the movie of the same name, it casts the player in Bond's role as he faces six different challenges in his attempt to destroy the evil drug smuggler Sanchez.

Play begins with Bond and his partner, Felix Leiter flying their helicopter over Cray Cay to prevent Sanchez from escaping in his jeep. Next Bond leaps into action and must make his way through a large number of Sanchez's henchmen set up to ambush him. He has only his wits and a 15-shot Baretta to ensure—or at least try to ensure—his survival.

Then Bond must reboard the helicopter and attempt to capture Sanchez's escape plane—in midair of all places. The fourth segment places Bond right into the thick of things as he interrupts a drug smugglers' drop-off. It takes all his swimming and underwater-combat skills to escape. Fortunately, he can capture the enemy divers' own weapons to help protect himself.

After this comes a high-speed barefoot water-ski excursion behind the escaping seaplane. Dodging rocks and floating objects, Bond must work his way forward, to gain control of the plane itself. The final phase occurs just after Sanchez's drug factory is destroyed. Somehow Sanchez escapes again, and Bond must use a crop duster to land on a special truck that can then be used to destroy all of Sanchez's fleet of drug-carrying tankers.

Unlike the movie, there is no end to Bond's chase. After the final level is complete, play begins again at the start, though it's sped up. Graphics are the game's strong point; those in *License to Kill* are crisp, clear and legible. Most objects stand out from the screen with a 3-D look and feel to them. Unfortunately,



this is the only good thing about the game.

Play in *License to Kill* is extremely difficult to learn, and this greatly hinders enjoyment. The skimpy documentation doesn't help here either. A complete list of available actions is given in the four pages of rules, but little of the strategy is explained. It takes a while for even the most experienced players to get the hang of things. Unfortunately, things that should work don't, and things that shouldn't do.

For example, in the first stage, the best way to get through is simply to fly forward as fast as you can. Enemy shots seem to have no impact on Bond's helicopter, and maneuvering to destroy any of the hostile installations often brings the helicopter in contact with one of the many trees or buildings that line the route. Strangely enough, even at the highest altitude, these obstacles cannot be flown over; they simply destroy the chopper. Let's get serious for a minute—can anyone tell me what kind of helicopter cannot fly over a few trees or buildings?

Varying the play mechanics between phases is a good idea. If properly executed it would have made the overall game more challenging and enabled it to hold up to repeated playings. But DoMark failed to produce the proper balance between playability and difficulty. Rather than an ongoing challenge, they ended with a frustrating experience.

*License to Kill* does not live up to its hype or the movie on which it is based. While the play segments are drawn from the film, the action falls far short of the excitement that makes every Bond movie a favorite.

—R. B. A.

DoMark  
c/o Bröderbund  
17 Paul Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903-2101  
(415) 492-3200

## Sword of the Samurai

MICROPROSE

Versions: IBM PC (\$59.95)

It was a time when the worth of a man was measured by his skill with steel, a time when honor and duty were more important than life itself.

The Japanese feudal period has proven a highly effective setting for all types of popular media, including several computer programs prior to *Sword of the Samurai*. Players who have striven to attain the Shogunate in these other games (particularly Koei's fine release, *Nobunaga's Ambition*) may question the need to purchase this product and begin their struggle anew. The answer lies in the approach chosen by the design staff at MicroProse. Prior products cap-

RATINGS:	
Sound/Music	9
Graphics	9
Playability	9
Overall	9



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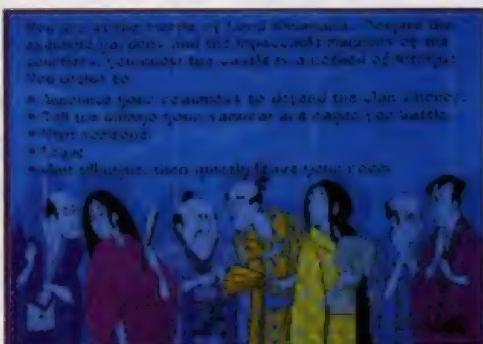
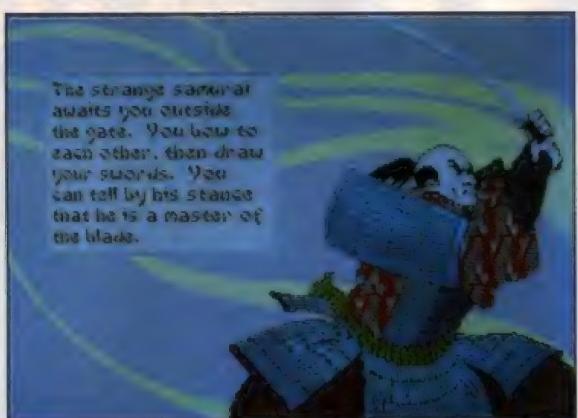
Ghostbusters™ II © 1989 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. Nintendo and Nintendo Entertainment System are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc.

tured the economic, political and military intricacies of the period, but did little to convey the essence of what life as a samurai was like. When MicroProse made the attainment and maintenance of honor (which retains its position as the dominant influence in Japanese society even today) the focal point of *Sword of the Samurai*, they created the first true samurai simulation.

The player begins as a young samurai of 15, the age of ascension marked by a ceremony known as *gempuku*. In this capacity, the on-screen protagonist rules a small fief, has a few lesser samurai as retainers and is one of several other vassals to the ruler of the province, known as the *hatamoto*. The object of the game is to attain the positions of *hatamoto*, *daimyo* (the leader of a clan) and *Shogun* (the leading *daimyo* in all Japan). Each contender for these positions is rated for his honor, land holdings, samurai retainers, generalship and ability as a swordsman.

The player begins each of the three levels of the game as the least capable and must strive to overcome rivals prior to ascending to the next level. In the struggles for *hatamoto* and *daimyo*, this rarely involves open combat, as such a thing would be quite dishonorable among members of the same clan. Instead, one's honor is raised through the completion of deeds for one's master, such as defeating bands of thieves, pirates or wandering *ronin* (masterless samurai). Additionally, one may achieve a more honorable position by putting down rebellions, donating land to the Buddhists or marrying well. Players may also experience some of the less savory and most dishonorable aspects of the quest for power. Kidnapping, assassination, treacherous theft, rebellious incitation and setups are features of the era that find their way into every game, whether the player opts to utilize these techniques or not.

*Sword of the Samurai* is a difficult game to classify. In addition to the simulation and obvious role-playing qualities, elements of the game should appeal to strategy and arcade enthusiasts as well. The former will appreciate the clash of armies, depicted from an eye-in-the-sky perspective, with animated formations advancing, clashing and retreating over realistic terrain



**MicroProse's  
*Sword of the  
Samurai* mixes  
strategy, RPG,  
arcade and sim-  
ulation elements  
into one tight  
package.**

features. Standard battle formations and maneuvers of the period are faithfully re-created, with the ability to intervene and reposition forces to flank or enfilade the enemy.

Arcade aficionados will appreciate the two forms of individual combat. The most classic of these involves the confrontation of two samurai in a duel to the death. Players view their character from behind as he advances from the bottom of the screen toward his opponent. A full range of parries, blocks and attacks are available (joystick control is best), and the opponents are often quite challenging. The other form of individual combat occurs when one takes on gangs of bandits or enters another's castle for the commission of an illicit deed. The latter is the most dangerous because all guards must be killed quickly so as not to spread the alarm. None that have seen the character may be left alive to identify him as the perpetrator of the heinous act. Combat occurs from a top-down perspective similar to *Gauntlet*, and the character can kill enemies at a distance with arrows.

In addition to the animation of the action sequences, the game is filled with numerous still-life screens depicting events occurring around the player. Each of these has the character and quality of a fine Japanese painting and greatly enhances the aesthetic appeal of the product. Owners of Ad Lib sound boards will also be impressed by the authentic Japanese Kabuki music that complements the flow of events perfectly.

*Sword of the Samurai* is definitely a tour de force of life as a warlord in feudal Japan, and a product of extreme honor.

—Ed Dille

MicroProse  
180 Lakefront Drive  
Hunt Valley, MD 21030  
(301) 771-1151

## The Third Courier

ACCOLADE

Version: IBM (\$39.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music	7
Graphics	8
Playability	8
Overall	7

Although recent events in Eastern Europe and the city of Berlin may make the setting of *The Third Courier* obsolete, the political intrigue and espionage portrayed by the game remain firmly rooted in reality. Players assume the personality of Moondancer, an operative of an unnamed intelligence agency known simply as "the Company." The premise of the game involves the disappearance of three couriers en route to a top-secret conference in Brussels, each of whom carried a segment of the NATO non-nuclear defense plans. Given the existing trend toward disarmament, the value of such information to the Warsaw Pact would be undeniable. Moondancer must recover the three components prior to the NATO meeting, and before they can be passed to the Soviets.

Players must initially establish a dossier for

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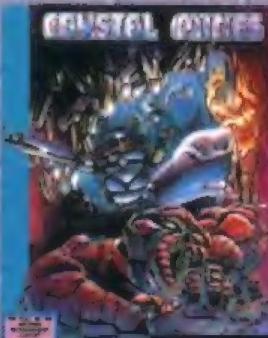
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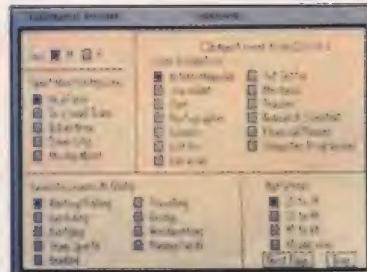
the agent they intend to control throughout the game. Basic choices are required for personal history, interests, age and a cover occupation. The character is then given one or more personality traits as well as numerical ratings for some standard role-playing character attributes: strength, intelligence, knowledge, intuition and health. As players solve puzzles, they gain experience points that modify these attributes and reveal additional personality traits as well. The idea that characters wouldn't already know these idiosyncrasies about themselves is unrealistic, but the game mechanic works in context.

All events in the game are driven from a central action screen. The left side of the screen is bordered like a strip of film, the center of which provides a first-person perspective in the direction the character is facing. The graphics within the window are rudimentary. All streets in Berlin are virtually indistinguishable from one another without the aid of a status box giving the current location. Berlin, sans any sign of human habitation (i.e., pedestrians, automobiles, etc.), is nothing more than an X, Y grid for movement purposes.

Interactions with non-playing characters (NPCs) occur randomly for unimportant encounters like fending off the seemingly endless array of vagabonds and drunkards that are intent on doing in the player character and whenever the character enters establishments or offices. Dialogue interaction with NPCs is limited and canned—people either know something relevant or they don't. The right side of the screen consists of a bar graph of the levels for each character attribute and pull-down menus of the different actions available to the character. The fact that certain options are shaded and unavailable at certain times actually serves to simplify some of the decisions.

The fictional storyline is tightly written and well paced. Many of the puzzles are quite challenging and require a fair amount of footwork exploring Berlin to assemble the necessary clues. Because one is working against the clock, it's important to search for the missing items in the proper sequence. The race against time is aided by the ability to obtain many of the necessary clues in several ways. Also, when a clue leads to a certain location and the event expected does not occur immediately upon arriving there, utilize the stakeout option.

*The Third Courier* is an intermediate-level adventure that proves a welcome change of



Berlin is the setting for *The Third Courier*, an original, high-quality adventure game by Accolade.



pace from the current glut of genre-specific role-playing games (i.e., science fiction/fantasy). This isn't to demean the many fine products that are contained in those groupings, but programs such as *The Third Courier* win points for originality.

The game supports hard-disk installation, joystick or mouse input and is only copy protected via a slide-rule code device provided. Despite the somewhat disappointing lack of ingenuity in the graphic presentation and other minor shortcomings noted herein, *The Third Courier* is a worthwhile addition to any adventure gamers' library.

—E. D.

Accolade  
550 S. Winchester Blvd.  
San Jose, CA 95128  
(408) 985-1700.

## Space Rogue

ORIGIN

Versions: Apple II (\$49.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$49.95),  
IBM PC (\$49.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music	7
Graphics	8
Playability	9
Overall	8

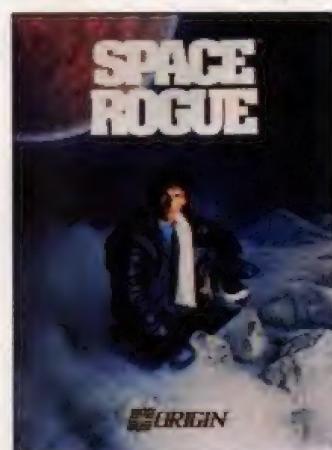
*Space Rogue* is perhaps the most nonlinear adventure game yet designed. A tremendous interweaving of personalities and ambitions occurs in a plot of cosmic proportion. Indeed,

the fictional premise rivals that of Orson Scott Card's *Enders' Game* or Frank Herbert's classic *Dune* series.

Players of Sir-Tech's 3-D space combat simulator, *Deep Space*, may experience a sense of déjà vu in the initial segments of *Space Rogue*. To a certain degree, this perception is correct as both games were designed by Paul Neurath. The similarity ends promptly, however, when one becomes involved in the role-playing portion of *Space Rogue*. From the start, players have an inkling that storm clouds are brewing on the horizon, but no clear idea of how to influence the events that are occurring automatically, exclusive of any player interaction.

The character begins alone in a scout vessel, far from the nearest starbase, with no objective other than survival. Virtually all events occur in the Far Arm, a frontier of the Imperium that borders on Manchi space. The Manchi are a sentient race of insectoids about which little is known, because so far no one has determined how to communicate with them.

Players opt to become either merchants, pirates or bounty hunters. These are not clear-cut labels, as each player is rated for their reputation with each of the three groupings based on actions taken throughout the game. As an example, if one encounters a merchant in deep space and fires on



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it, this raises one's standing with the pirates but lowers one's standing with the other groups. Herein lies the major temptation to lead players astray. Regardless of the chosen profession, if a player focuses upon becoming the best at that profession and arming their ship accordingly, space combat becomes the centerpiece of the game. This was the goal of *Deep Space* but that is definitely not the focus of *Space Rogue*.

There is little to pull errant players into the mainstream of the game. Consequently, it's necessary to actively pursue every angle and minor objective until one is suddenly thrust into the heart of the game. When this happens, the seemingly unrelated objectives pursued up to that point start to crystallize in the players' mind. The manner in which *Space Rogue* accomplishes this, and the subtle layering of information, create the most realistic feeling of "having greatness thrust upon one's self" ever produced by any game.

The program is sound, with only one minor mechanical inconvenience. Copy protection is via documentation, but if one makes a mistake typing the required word, all subsequent attempts to restore the game via inputting the correct word will be greeted by a message intended for pirates. This situation continues until the computer is rebooted. The program supports hard-drive installation, joystick or mouse input (although keyboard control of space combat seemed easiest), and all graphics modes through VGA/MCGA.

The illusion of 3-D space combat, especially in the Newtonian flight mode, is quite convincing. Spacecraft are depicted in polygon-fill mode against a star-studded, black-matte background. Object animation is smooth and flawless as the craft conduct all forms of maneuvers for combat and evasion. In various star bases and outposts, players view an overhead perspective of their character and the room currently occupied. All items in the room may be inspected when standing nearby, and NPC interaction occurs via pull-down menus from the main screen. The gamer selects topics from the menu to receive preset speeches or uses a limited parser to inquire about other subjects.

Although players are cautioned not to become overinvolved in space combat, it's still important to develop a proficiency, as this is vital to the end game. (Don't try the end game until equipped with a stealth device.) Another area that must be mastered is the successful transit of the Malir gates, essentially worm



**Cinemaware's computerized B-movie, *It Came From the Desert*, uses cinematic techniques to tell its story.**

holes in space that allow rapid movement from one system to another. Finally, as would be expected, the Far Arm is a dangerous place, so frequent game saves are in order.

*Space Rogue* is a highly intriguing, challenging glimpse of an alternate reality. Players will find that the full scope of the undertaking is not evident until one is well into the game, but it's a journey not to be missed.

—E. D.

Origin Software  
P.O. Box 161750  
Austin, TX 7871  
(800) 999-4939

## It Came From the Desert

CINEMWARE

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95), Atari ST (\$49.95), IBM PC (\$49.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music	9
Graphics	9
Playability	9
Overall	9

This breathtaking arcade-adventure is another Cinemaware time capsule. Designer/director David Riordan and producer Pat Cook present a science-fiction scenario set in the early

1950s, when men were men, women were women and bug-eyed monsters crawled out from under every rock.

David Riordan's name may be new to many, even though he has made many contributions to interactive gaming, but *It Came From the Desert* proves he's an outstanding talent. No game has used cinematic techniques more effectively or blended action, strategy and role playing with more skill.



The nearly seamless script would do credit to a topflight action film. Not only is the dialogue at least as good as any found in the B-movies that inspired it, but the structure of the interactive experience is flawless. Events naturally lead the player, as Dr. Greg Bradley, from mind-stretching hunts for concrete evidence to heart-stopping confrontations with the mutant ants. The logical flow of the multipathed plot makes a certified classic like *Defender of the Crown* seem crude by comparison.



The action is centered in Lizard Breath, California, a dusty jerkwater town in the desert. The player can wander through the community, meeting and talking with its assorted citizens. Though this doesn't always advance the plot, it's an

*continued on page 130*

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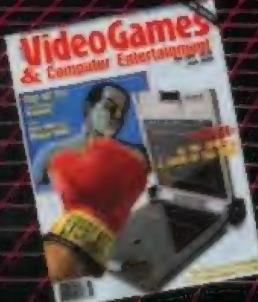
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opportunity not to be missed. In particular, a trip to the bar is strongly recommended.

The central portion of the main display screen presents the illustrative material. It's first-person perspective when exploring the town or encountering the ants, though overhead-perspective maps are utilized in battle games and to monitor the deployment of bug-chasing forces.

Jeffrey Hilbers and Jeff Godfrey illustrate so well that *It Came From the Desert* looks a lot better than the movies it supposedly imitates. The still screens really show off the graphics power of the Amiga and Atari ST.

Although there is a lot happening in *It Came From the Desert*, the streamlined user interface keeps play mechanics subordinate to the play experience. The documentation is unusually thorough for a Cinemaware title, but the game is extremely easy to learn.

The Thought Box, located immediately above the graphic display, offers choices. The player highlights the desired selection with the joystick and presses the action button to confirm the command. If the option has a limited time frame, it blinks to alert the user. The bottom quarter of the screen contains the text box, which prints descriptions and narrative.

From the first game of chicken on the highway to the burn-the-nest firefight, *It Came From the Desert* is computer entertainment at its finest. With half the year gone by, it rates as an early favorite to capture "Game of the Year" honors next winter.

—Arnie Katz

Cinemaware  
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.  
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## Sands of Fire

THREE-SIXTY SOFTWARE

Versions: IBM PC (\$44.95),  
Macintosh (\$49.95)

### RATINGS:

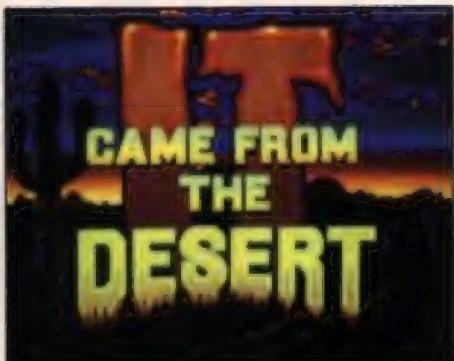
Sound/Music 8

Graphics 8

Playability 8

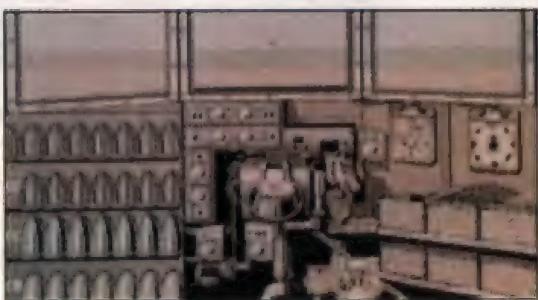
Overall 8

Tank simulations have been rolling through the software marketplace lately like Patton smashing through the Reich's tattered defenses at the close of WWII. Since the start of 1989, no fewer than five new tank simulations—including *Abrams Battle Tank* (Electronic Arts), *Tank* (Spectrum



**Above: *It Came From the Desert* is an early favorite for VG&CE's 1990 Computer Game of the Year.**

**Below: Three-Sixty Software's tank simulation, *Sands of Fire*, may well be the most enjoyable game to arise from this computer genre.**



Holobyte), *Steel Thunder* (Accolade) and *Heavy Metal* (Access)—have debuted, making it easy to get lost in the crowd. Yet amidst all the grinding of heavy treads and the sparkle of late 20th-century high technology, the most enjoyable tank game of the new breed may well be Digital Illusions' *Sands of Fire*.

*Sands of Fire* eschews the wonders of modern warfare in favor of the more classic view of tank warfare: the player commands combined U.S. and British tank units against the fabled Afrika Korps. Here are tanks that are truly tanks—none of these contemporary computerized monsters with their Sabot rounds, TOW-2 missile launchers, automated targeting and Halon anti-fire systems. The four types of armored mobile weapons available here—M3 Stuart, Crusader Cruiser, Matilda and M4 Sherman tanks—are the gritty mechanized monsters we all remember from films like *Attack* and *Battle of the Bulge*. They're big, slow, ugly, unsophisticated and tremendous fun to operate within the context of this intelligently realized simulation.

After booting-up, the user gets a choice of options: Training, Single Battle, Campaign and restoring a previously saved game. If the player selects the battle option, a map appears listing the available battle and campaign scenarios: Kasserine Pass and Tunis & Bizerte (American troops), Taking Tobruk, Operation Crusader, Fall of Tobruk and El Alamein (British). An overview for the battle/campaign area then appears, followed by ammo configuration and battle orders (route, HQ locations and battle area). The player then selects from the available tanks and chooses the formation(s) from which they will wage war.

Once the pregame options are dealt with, the battle begins, and this is where *Sands of Fire* really shines. The visual display is one of *Sands*' strongest features: a triangular, three-window view of the battlefield underneath which is arrayed a vivid first-person presentation of the tank's innards. After each round is fired from the main gun, the spent shell must be ejected and a new shell selected. A pair of hairy arms then appears, lifts the shell from the appropriate rack and loads it into the breach. When the machine gun fires, we see the ammo belts moving through an automatic weapon as case after case of ammo is used up. The command buttons are easy to use: a pair of turret controls (fast and slow turn), elevation controls for the main gun, fire buttons (for main and machine guns) and a "sight" command that allows the commander to use the binoculars for in-close targeting. The graphics and animation are fabulously realistic in the Macintosh version we tested, and the program also makes excellent

use of speech synthesis (for example, after a new shell has been loaded, the commander is apprised by his crew of the shell type and its ready status).

Tanks of this era may not have possessed

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the wonders of our modern age, but they make ideal grist for the gaming mill, as *Sands of Fire* aptly demonstrates. Here, war is not some remote exercise, conducted from the bowels of an all-but-impenetrable rolling fortress, but a hands-on and decidedly deadly business. *Sands of Fire* is highly recommended for fans of this genre.

—Bill Kunkel

Three-Sixty Software  
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## Trivial Pursuit

PARKER BROTHERS

Version: IBM PC (\$34.95)

### RATINGS:

Sound/Music	8
Graphics	7
Playability	8
Overall	7

Breathes there a soul with mind astute who has not yet played *Trivial Pursuit*? This board game keeps trivia fans burning midnight oil around America's kitchen tables to determine who has the most useless knowledge. Now it's been updated for computer by Parker Brothers' first entry in the '90s electronic market.

One to four players may play; up to three of the four may be computer personalities. Available are Holly Wood, entertainment insider; Deke Athlon, sports whiz; Mme. Musique, notable for musical knowledge; Prof. Prune, academically educated; Joe Average, all-around eclectic; and Arndt Sharp, who surprises everyone when he gets an answer right. (The selection screen notes: "You've forgotten more than Arndt will ever learn.")

Another screen offers the choice of question categories—six subcategories each in five general categories: 1980s, Volume II, Sports, Music and Movies. Each player moves markers around the perimeter or along the spokes of a circular game board according to the throw of a die. The idea is to circumnavigate the board, then move into the center to win. It's not quite that simple, though.

Spaces are color-keyed to question categories or hold-dice icons allowing a rethrow. On a color space, the player must correctly answer a question to continue play. The player may move in any direction, selecting any place at the distance thrown, but the object is to land on the space at the head of each spoke and correctly answer a question there. This gains the player one "wedge." Only when all six wedges are won does it behoove the player to aim for the center. The place and the win must then be earned by correctly answering a final, randomly chosen question.

Graphically, the programmers did pretty well by this game considering that they stuck strictly to CGA and EGA versions, with no support for Tandy's 16-color mode or other monitor modes. It comes on two 5.25" floppy disks—one for the program and one for ques-

tions and answers—or one 3.5" disk and takes quite a while to load.

Because it takes so long to load, a chatty README file recommends copying the game onto a hard drive, using an included installation program. Its author notes that an alternative is to get in the habit of visiting the refrigerator while the game is starting—a technique that works, but may tend to gain players a few pounds as an undesirable side effect. Whether you use the hard disk or refrigerator method, the game's key disk-protection technique requires that the original master program disk be in a floppy drive when starting. The dreaded inconvenience of using the 5.25" floppy disks is compounded by the subtle reality that regardless of whether or

not the player has more than one floppy drive, the program and question disks must run on the same drive and therefore must be switched when the time comes. A game may be saved (though, sadly, only one at a time), if desired.

There are limitations in terms of reacting with the computer-generated players, of course, and the program's limited database of congratulatory and/or sympathetic remarks—"You're on a roll" and "Who knew that one? Not me!"—tends to wear thin. There are musical leitmotifs for each category of question; the music can be turned off from a help screen if that, too, gets old.

The questions are hard, which is perhaps good in that it may keep the circulation among the players going. The program is designed so that if one exits the game properly each time, the entire repertoire of questions will cycle through before repeating.

Despite the presence of the computer-generated players, this is a game best played with two or more human participants for the following reason: A lone player is on the honor system with *Trivial Pursuit*. In this version it's up to the player to acknowledge whether he or she answered a question correctly. There's nothing wrong with that—in the long run, as everybody knows, cheaters only cheat themselves—but there is sometimes a temptation to just get on with it after missing several difficult questions in a row.

Trivia games are perennially popular, and this computerized version is certain to make fans of the genre happy.

—Ross Chamberlain



**Trivial Pursuit**  
marks Parker  
Brothers' return  
to software pub-  
lishing and is a  
product that  
should satisfy  
fans of the trivia  
board game.

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Giganticrab makes Leve a formidable challenge.



Burai Fighter attempts to navigate Level 2.



The terrifying Slimedrag master of the Burai.

In a remote corner of the galaxy lives a race of super-brains known as the Burai. Their vast mental capabilities are focused upon one goal: the conquest of the universe! They are creating huge armies of robo-mutants, which will soon overrun the galaxy – unless you can stop them! You must somehow penetrate the seven manufacturing bases of the Burai, where you will battle the most fearsome army of mutant rogues ever imagined – including the monstrous super-mutant guarding each base. But with your awesome arsenal of weaponry, victory may be within your reach. It's up to you to rid the universe of the evil Burai once and for all!



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FIGHTER  
DELUXE**

This is the issue where your favorite programmable practitioner begins awarding game packets for the best letter, so let's dig into our mailbag and see who copped the historically significant first prize. We had several strong contenders this month, but my favorite was from Barbara J. Major of Tacoma, Washington:

#### question

Congratulations on your retirement! I want you to know that I enjoy your monthly column in *VG&CE* tremendously and look forward to reading it every issue.

I am a 36-year-old single woman who loves to play home video games. I don't have many sympathetic friends in my camp. Unfortunately, I am around adults most of the time [who] view my hobby as something for teenage lads. I can't convince them how thrilling it is to conquer a game and make it to the end of one that I've been working on for a year, but that's their problem.

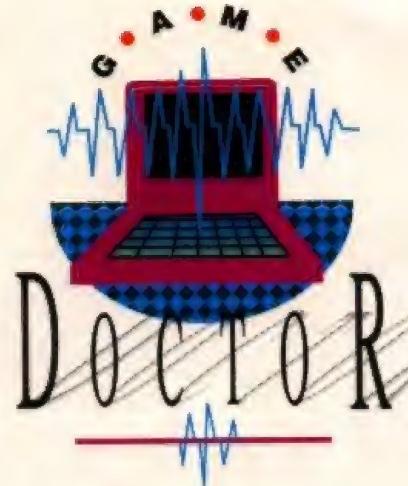
I am relatively new to this hobby (one and a half years) but have played, studied and practiced very hard at it. I presently own 49 NES games, 22 SMS games, 48 Atari 2600/7800 carts, 20 Intellivision games, 11 TurboGrafx-16 TurboCards and seven for Game Boy. What drove me to dedicated video systems was the frustration I experienced playing games on the computer, in particular, my Apple IIc. I'm not trying to push my opinion, but a machine that does word processing and spreadsheets can't possibly give its all to game-playing, because its resources are split up too many ways. So, when I want to type I use the computer; when I want to play, I use my video-game systems.

Now I have a few questions for you:

1) Why does a lot of the music on the SMS cartridges have a similarity to it? Some of the themes don't vary much from the others, and worse yet, I've heard bits and pieces from some themes in other Sega cartridges!

This is one reason why I shied away from buying the Genesis, great as it may be; Sega doesn't seem to offer the variety in sounds and music like Nintendo—or is it because the programming people just didn't take advantage of all it could do?

2) How do the games get onto the circuit boards and chips in the cartridges themselves? Some people have told me



ANSWER

Great letter, Barbara. I didn't have any *Pac-Man* or *Donkey Kong* items to forward, but an Activision cap, a key chain, stickers and two game buttons are en route! Now to answer those questions:

1) The use of stock musical phrases is a practice that goes back to the early sound movies. Both the SMS and NES have approximately the same audio capabilities, but the Genesis has absolutely awesome sound effects and music. When the Doc slaps on his cans (headphones, that is) and gets into the stereo music and spectacular sound effects, my enjoyment of the game is enhanced by a factor of three.

2) Most of today's video games are actually written using computer systems. When the code is ready, a device called a "ROM burner" is used to move the program to a cartridge. The burner is hooked up to the development system and blank chips are inserted into the ROM slots, enabling the code to be translated directly to the chip(s), which are less vulnerable to piracy than disk-based software.

As to the wisdom of Nintendo's belated entry into the 16-bit dedicated marketplace, you may be right. On the other hand, the Nintendo-based merchandise you refer to has been available for more than a year. In fact, many of those products were first shown to the industry more than two years ago. As to why it took so long for them to reach your local store shelves, I have no idea.

Thanks for the enjoyable letter, Barbara, and I hope you enjoy your prize packet.

#### question

Before I get into my question, I thought I would point out an error in your "diagnosis" in the February '90 issue of *VG&CE* by referring to the Coleco Gemini as "an Atari 2600 adapter for the ColecoVision." The Gemini was, in fact, a full-fledged "independent" video-game system that would hook up to your TV. It was slightly larger than the current 2600, dark in color, came packaged with the usual cables, had a pair of controllers that possessed both a joystick and paddle knob and *Donkey Kong* was a bonus cartridge. Expansion Module #1 was the Atari 2600 adapter for the ColecoVision, followed by Expansion

—Barbara J. Major  
Tacoma, Washington

Module #2, which was the steering wheel, and unfortunately, the much ballyhooed Expansion Module #3 or Super Game Module was never released. Expansion Module #3 later became the ADAM Family Computer System.

My question concerns the NES. Take any NES [and] flip it over. On the bottom of the unit you'll find the usual jargon about where it was made, etc. You should also see, almost in the center, a small plastic cover. Simply pinch the edges and take it off. Underneath, you should find a rectangular piece of raised plastic with "slits" along its edges. Its design led me to believe that it was intended to be removed very easily for one reason or another. At first, I didn't think much of it, but one day I took my NES apart to examine its internal make-up. To my surprise, I discovered that an expansion slot lay underneath that raised piece of rectangular plastic, similar to the ones found on the Atari 5200 and ColecoVision! I would appreciate it, Doc, if you could "operate" on an NES yourself and give us readers a "diagnosis" of the "patient's" expansion slot, calling upon your great medical expertise and perhaps a little inside information from Nintendo of America to get to the bottom of this video-game mystery.

In parting, I leave you with another question: What do you think of the TurboGrafx-16's CD game player? Do you think this video-game medium will catch on? Or is it doomed to the same fate as laser disks (e.g., *Dragon's Lair*, *Space Ace*, etc.) suffered in the early '80s. Remember back when Coleco and Atari rushed to release their own laser-disk expansion units for the ColecoVision and 5200 respectively, billing them as the "wave of the future," only to have the idea and fantastic hype die with a sickening whimper?

—Jason P. Bennett

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada



You're quite correct about the Gemini: it was a 2600 clone, but it was an independent system, rather than an add-on for the ColecoVision. Obviously, I had it confused with the first Expansion Module.

As to the matter of the mystery NES slot, Nintendo will only say that it was originally intended to be an expansion port, but since no compatible peripheral was

ever produced to use it (stateside, at least), it became a vestigial video-game organ of sorts.

Finally, on the matter of the TG-16's CD peripheral, I have mixed feelings. I am absolutely confident that CD will become a viable memory-storage medium for computers and dedicated video-game systems; I am not so sanguine about this particular CD player since it is so expensive (current discussions place the suggested retail price hovering near \$400). Also, the CD-based software NEC is currently producing is said to only make use of the CD in producing audio, which would not be sufficient to get the technology over the hump. Good letter, Jason! And, speaking of good letters, here's our first runner-up in the Prize Packet Sweepstakes:



As a newcomer to the IBM computers, I would like to know if [the work my daughter does in school on her] Apple II [can be converted] to accommodate my 5.25" or 3.5" IBM floppy drives. If so, how might I have this done?

—Mac McLellan

Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada



Sure, Mac, there are several ways you can transfer files from one system to another. If the computers have modems and telecommunications software, you could use a service, like Delphi or CompuServe, for the file transfer. Just go online with the Apple and upload the files (which must be saved in ASCII). Then take the IBM online, go to the work area, and download those same files. There may be some infelicities in the transfer (boxes or other unwanted symbols may appear and some of the spacing may be wrong), but these can be easily remedied.

The other way to do it is with a null-modem cable, which can be cheaply purchased in most computer stores. You'll still need telecommunications software, but this way you can literally hook the computers together for a fast, direct transfer. Again, the transfer must be done with ASCII (the standardized format for sending files between different computer systems) files, so when saving the Apple material, make sure it is saved in ASCII. ■

## Q&A QUICKIES:

• Chris Tieman of lovely Palm Springs, California, wonders if NES games "have some kind of time limit where the game might just die on you"? Not really, Chris. Assuming the contacts are kept clean, there is no intrinsic process of decay that would "burn out" your cartridge. However, some cartridges use a game-save feature that involves installing a battery in the cartridge casing. This battery leads the cartridge to think it's continually plugged in, thereby retaining the game in progress and high scores (that would otherwise be lost when the game was turned off). Like all batteries, this one will eventually cash in its chips, but the game itself should continue to be playable even after the battery expires.

• John W. Ellis of Union, Kentucky, is a proud new Genesis owner, but he still feels the arcade coin-ops seem "one step ahead of the home consoles, especially in graphics," and ponders whether the coin-ops use 32-bit processors or what? Actually, coin-ops use a wide array of special technology, ranging from super monitors to hyped-up processors. However, that is generally the rule for top-line products only. Many of the arcade machines you see these days are basically glorified video-game systems: they provide the housing, and the operator (rather than purchasing an entirely new machine at a cost of at least several thousand dollars) simply replaces the program board and cabinet art and, voila, a brand new game at a fraction of the cost. In fact, several coin-op games have actually used Amiga computers to drive them. The Mastertronic/Arcadia Amiga version "Mega Games" series, including *Magic Johnson Basketball*, and several other coin-op titles, are literally the same two bit game you play in your local arcade.

The bottom line, however, is that top-shelf arcade games—which are designed to play one game supremely well—are likely to maintain an edge over home video-game systems, which must be designed to accommodate a wide variety of programs.

Well, the shadow on my Macintosh tells me we've run out of room this month, but we'll be here next issue with more greats Q's, several brilliant A's and a *Game Doctor* prize packet for the best letter. Send your prize-winning correspondence to: *The Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, Nevada 89107. See you in 30!

# COMPUTER STRATEGIES

## Getting Your Revenge With Double Dragon II

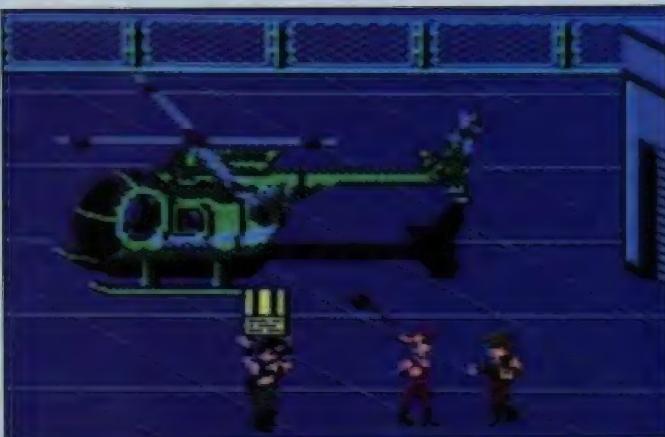
VIRGIN GAMES

**Versions:** Amiga, Atari ST,  
Commodore 64, IBM PC

In their latest adventure, twin brothers Billy and Jimmy Lee set out to wipe out the subhuman scum who savagely murdered Billy's sweetheart, Marian. One or two players must fight their way through the heliport, into a warehouse, across the country and finally to evil Willy's lair, where Marian's body waits to be reincarnated.

The strategy behind *Double Dragon II* is a simple yet important one: Know your powers and when to use them. There are five separate moves that, when used at the proper time, bring our heroes out of most battles unscathed. The first is the simple punch, which is the main move to use at close range. Always try to be on the same horizontal level with an opponent when you're using this or any other move, except the hurricane kick. The punch is important because it's one of the only moves that players can use without flying through the air. This allows players to continually punch an opponent at close range until he is eliminated. This move should also be used at close range to knock a weapon out of a thug's hand. The other hand move is the elbow, which can be used if a thug is sneaking up right behind the player or holding on from behind. Use it to knock the opponent back a step, then quickly turn and punch his lights out.

The remaining three moves are kicking options. The reverse roundhouse is a good



**It's imperative to keep your distance from the big thugs in *Double Dragon*, but don't underestimate the little guys, either.**

kick to use on an opponent who is coming up from behind but is a good inch away. Use this kick to let him know that surprise attacks are unwise. The jumping kick proves useful since it will always knock an opponent down with a single connection. This is important, since most thugs do require at least three falls before they are eliminated. The trick here is to use it on only one or two thugs at a time, since it will often launch the player right into the thugs as they fall. If there are more than two, this may place the player in the thick of things. After using this kick, always be prepared to back it up with a few punches should the thugs get up right in front of you.

The last kick is the hurricane kick that, although powerful, is difficult to use successfully, and a failed attempt usually leads to disaster. Try to use this kick only when the thugs are closing in from both sides, and it looks like trouble. Start by positioning a brother about 1 inch lower than the oncoming thugs. Then, when the thugs are within an inch from the player, pull the stick down and press fire. The second the brother leaves the ground, jingle the stick left and right quickly to spin his leg and hopefully, take out all those who dare to challenge.

The second key element to a successful game is the cunning use of weapons that are scattered throughout the game. Start by observing the oncoming enemy. Try to first knock down any of them who possess weapons; they are the most dangerous. Once a weapon-wielding thug hits the floor, he/she drops the weapon that's being held. Go for the weapon only if the thugs are far enough away so that the brother can safely retrieve it and launch an attack. If players attempt to bend down to grab a weapon when the thugs are close by, they open themselves up for a substantial



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beating, and the weapon simply flies off somewhere.

Once a weapon is obtained, try to use it to keep the thugs away from close combat. Keep swinging it, and it will do severe damage. The problem is that sometimes the thugs will be onto you and try to approach from above or below. Be aware of this and try to maneuver into a horizontal position at all times. Should a thug manage to knock the weapon loose, don't panic and try to pick it up. Instead, punch like mad until they back off, then pick up the weapon when the coast is clear.

Always be on the lookout for a better weapon. As the game progresses players can advance from the ball and chain to an axe, a knife or even dynamite. All of these weapons have a greater range than the chain and should be grabbed whenever possible.

The last concern in *Double Dragon II* is the "big thugs" that are nastier than the little guys. It's extremely important to keep a distance from these guys and try to use a weapon on them whenever possible; they all have special close-range moves that are extremely lethal. Should players be forced into close-range combat with these brutes, the most successful move is to punch as quickly as possible and attempt to knock them down. Once they fall, make a run for the closest weapon, and let him have it!

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

## World Building With *Populous*

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga, IBM PC

This Electronic Arts' entry bestows divine power upon the player as he battles an evil deity for the right to rule the world. Gamers must fight to keep their population growing in numbers while using natural disasters to disrupt the enemy, who is attempting to do the same.

Although *Populous* may seem a bit complicated to the novice player, if one adheres to a few simple guidelines, it will soon be obvious that being a god isn't so tough after all. As the game begins, note that the populations are usually set up so that the enemy is on the other side of the globe. This gives players ample time to build up a respectable following before going into battle.

Start by flattening out the land around the people using the raise-lower land option. There are two important things to keep in mind in the early stages of

Though the novice *Populous* player will find that being a god is complicated, after playing for a while it will become more comfortable.



Castles build up the population faster than any other structure, and the walkers that originate from them will be stronger also.



game play. One is to get people settled and growing as quickly as possible. The other is to level off the land by building upward to match the higher sections. This is especially important when using the flood option that will be discussed later on. It is also crucial to make sure the command icon is on "settle," so the people will build as much as possible.

Try to establish at least three or four castles early on; they will prove important for a number of reasons. For instance, castles help build the population faster than any other structure. The walkers that emerge from these castles will also be stronger and, therefore, make excellent knights. Lastly, castles build up manna quickly, which will come in handy as the game progresses.

The one drawback to these structures is that castles take a while to fill to capacity; so there's a delay before these strong walkers emerge. This is not crucial early on, but later, players may need some strong walkers in a hurry. Try not to get carried away by building too many castles.

When the first castle is up and functioning, head over to the evil side and zap him with an earthquake or two in the area where he seems to be growing quickest. Once he knows you mean business, head back to the friendly side and resume building. Continue in this fashion until the three or four castles are complete, and then get ready for battle.

Now it's time to raise an army. The most important offense is the knight. Although natural disasters are a whole lot of fun and do cause damage, the knight is by far the best weapon manna can buy!

Now that the castles are producing strong followers, switch the icon to "go to papal magnet," and wait for a few walkers to collide and create a stronger leader. Once done, invoke the knight icon, and he'll be on his way. Continue to knight the leader until three or four knights are created. This army will head toward the enemy destroying any settlements it encounters. The trick is to follow behind the knights by placing the papal magnet in the area they just rummaged through. When this is done, the people will head towards the magnet and thereby begin their world conquest. When they reach the magnet, change the command to "settle," and they will then build a village in this new location to deploy them.

As for natural disasters, use them sparingly to slow enemy progress at key locations, but remember, it's almost always better to use manna, making another knight to storm the countryside than it is to shake up a single game grid. There is, however, one dis-

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aster that can play a key role in this fight for world conquest: the flood command. If a player is losing or wants to speed things up a bit, the flood command is the answer.

The important thing to remember here is that a flood raises the sea level across the *whole* world. This is why it's important to build the friendly settlements on high land early on. The computer does not anticipate a flood at a later date so it's therefore possible to drown most of its people while keeping the friendly people quite safe.

The only other significant disaster to use is the volcano. This option has an advantage over the others mainly because its effects are not as easily overcome. A volcano not only alters the terrain significantly, but it also spews rocks everywhere, making any attempt to rebuild quite a job. When using a volcano, it's best to use it for all it's worth. Try to seek out a strong enemy castle or village, since they do require a decent amount of manna.

Lastly, should a disaster like a volcano befall the player, remember that the raise-lower land option can be quite effective. Rocks can be eliminated by lowering the land under them into the sea, then back up again. This is an important strategy for leveling land, since rocks and trees hinder crop development, and after all, keeping the people happy and well-fed is the responsibility of any respectable god.

—F.T., Jr.

## Becoming a Top-Notch Space Harrier

MINDSCAPE

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

In Mindscape's recent arcade-to-PC translation, players are called upon to restore peace to the beautiful land of dragons. Gamers must fight their way through a horde of ghouls in an attempt to reach the ultimate ugly waiting for them at the end of each level. Only by wiping out this creature can players move to the next tier.

The strategy behind *Space Harrier* is simple, yet important. Start by practicing navigation of the harrier. The controls are sensitive in the home version, which makes it easy to oversteer and inadvertently run into one obstacle while trying to avoid another. It's only with practice that players will master this delicate art.

Once flying seems easier, it's time to master a successful firing technique. This is simple as long as the player keeps in mind one rule: No matter where the harrier is located, his shots all head toward the center of the screen.

Use this by positioning the harrier to the outside of a creature when firing at it. In other words, always be sure the harrier is positioned between the monster and the edge of

the screen, then let him have it. Keep your finger on the fire button at all times; it launches a constant stream of laser fire, knocking out most everything it hits. This is key since everything in *Space Harrier* is worth big points, even the trees and bushes!

Keep in mind that the enemy weaponry homes in on the harrier, therefore, it's important to remain on the move at all times. As long as the player keeps moving, all enemy shots miss their mark. The best way to do this is to try a sweeping motion from left to right or in a circle around the edge of the screen. Whichever way is preferred, just remember, this isn't a good place to stop and smell the roses.

At the end of each level, players confront a giant creature that requires quite a few hits before he dies. To make matters worse, this creature shoots fireballs that travel much faster than the oval shots the other guys use. The best strategy here is to start at the top middle of the screen and begin circling the perimeter while continuously firing. Since the enemy shots home in on where your harrier is, moving around the edge will cause all shots to fall behind the player. Meanwhile, harrier's shots *all* head toward the center and, therefore, will hit the creature. Keep the harrier moving steadily around the edge of the screen, and that super creature will be reduced to ashes in no time.

After Level 1, players begin to see obstacles that cannot be destroyed by laser fire. These include stone pillars, giant mushroom trees and so forth. Basically, if it looks quite solid, it probably is. It's at this juncture that players must use a steady hand to navigate around hindrances. Again, be careful not to oversteer.

Finally, after every fourth round, players are presented a bonus round where they ride the good dragon in an attempt to pick up some extra points. Once on the dragon, look just below her as she ascends and just above her as she descends to get a glimpse of what's in front. Try to steer her toward any tall obstacles; points are awarded for anything she runs into. If there are no tall objects, go for the little things, but remember: The dragon will only hit the little objects if she is descending. Don't waste time with them if there are enough trees to smash.

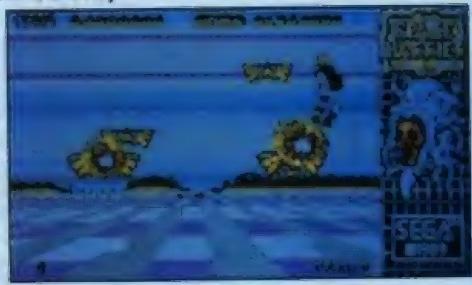
—F.T., Jr.



Keep in mind that enemy shots home in on the harrier, so you should try to stay in motion, thus prolonging your survival.



An excellent strategy to use in *Space Harrier* is to circle the outside edge of the playfield, which maximizes your offensive and defensive positioning.



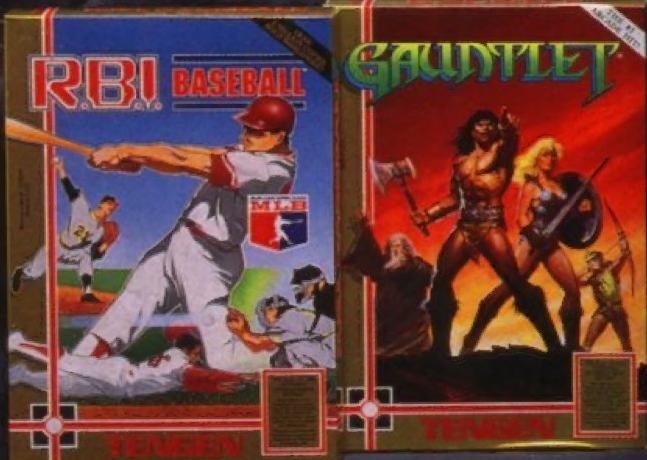


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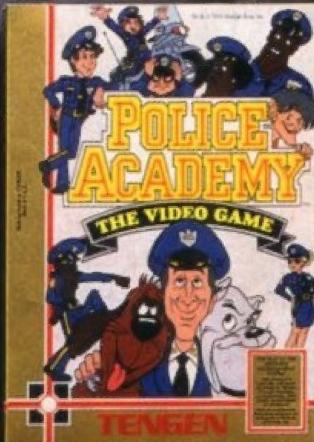
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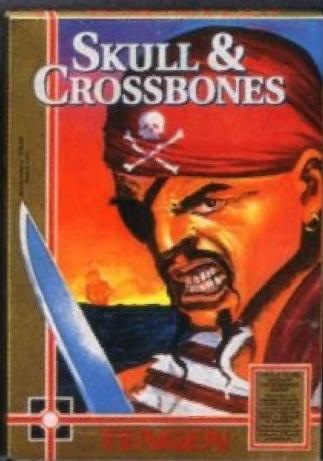
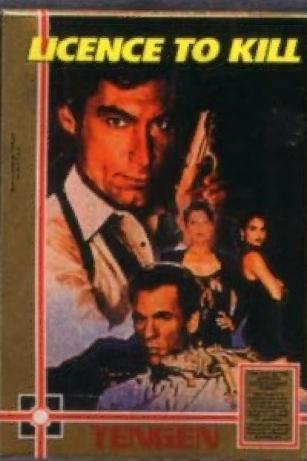
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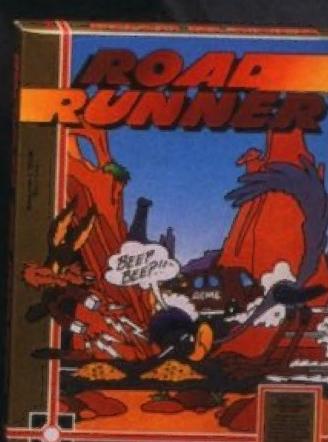
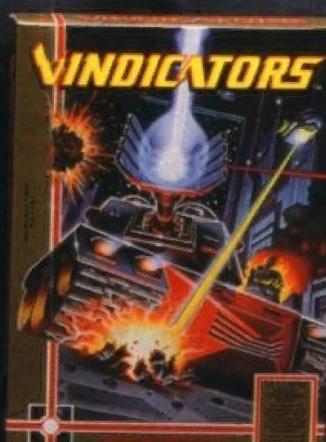
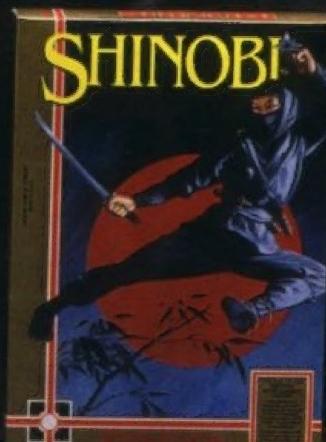
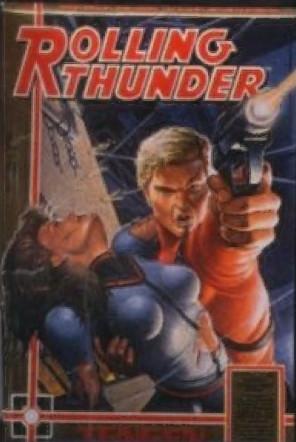
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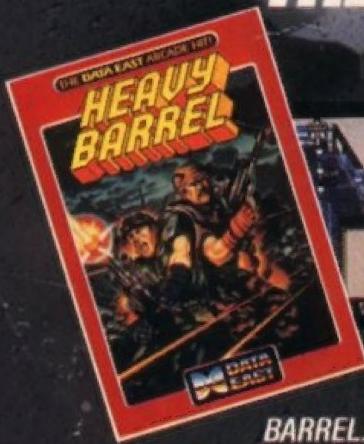
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